# SINGLES

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# SINGLES

CLOSE ANGLE ON FRANK WALKER. He is 24, a young businessman with an honest face. He's got a lot on his mind. He's concentrating, moving forward, performing an important task of some kind. We pull back to see he's in...

INT. SUPERMARKET ("THE STOCK MARKET") - EARLY EVENING

Frank rolls a cart down the aisle of this new and fully-outfitted 24-hour supermarket. A muzak version of Bread's "Baby I'm-A Want You" plays overhead. As sound continues, we CUT TO a very brief title on black.

TITLE: LIFE IS A SINGLES BAR

FRANK'S VOICE
Boy, you see it all in the supermarket.

Several shoppers roll past Frank. They exchange quick glances, mostly look down.

FRANK'S VOICE
People are lonely. Nobody looks you in the eye anymore.

Frank passes the magazine rack. Most of the magazines feature cover stories like: "What Happened to Casual Sex", "The New Chastity", "Virginity at 30".

FRANK'S VOICE
My favorite magazines are all filled with stories about sexual paranoia. It's all the people in my office talk about.

Frank passes a woman in ripped t-shirt and leopard-skin Spandex pants. She gives Frank a quick, energetic smile.

FRANK'S VOICE
People are desperate. This has got to be the worst time in the history of single people.
(pause)
I'm glad I'm with Elizabeth.

Frank rolls past the supermarket's salad bar. Several singles assemble their dinners-for-one.

INT. CHECK - OUT LINE

Frank places his food for two on the check-out belt. He looks casually at the Single Guy behind him. He's about 42, doughy, looks something like an older Frank. He wears two thin gold-chains. Self-consciously "young" clothes. Several boxes of Stoffer's Frozen Food.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I'm <u>really</u> glad I'm with Elizabeth.

Frank pays the clerk, is thanked by an automatic change-maker.

AUTO VOICE
Please bag your own.

Frank begins bagging his groceries.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER EVENING

Frank puts away groceries with Elizabeth, 25. She's attractive, intelligent-looking. Together, they look like a cover of <u>New York Magazine</u>.

ELIZABETH
Did you get the...

FRANK
...yeah.

She pulls out a package of gourmet popcorn.

ELIZABETH
Oh good.

FRANK
I almost didn't see it because it was in the gourmet section, instead of the...you know, the popcorn section.

ELIZABETH
We have to talk.

FRANK
<u>Talk</u> talk?

ELIZABETH
Yes. I just...how can I put this? I think we need some room to breathe. Very honestly...I want to say something right now, before anything happens. I feel us drifting apart and...
(sighs)
I'm having an affair.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COURTYARD - AFTERNOON - TWO DAYS LATER

An anguished Frank and Elizabeth sit on a stone seat near the fountain. It's a lunchtime spot for executives from the nearby buildings.

FRANK
I can't believe this.

ELIZABETH
This is traumatic for me for too, Frank. But you'll meet him, and you'll see. We're being adults about this.

FRANK
I didn't say 'I love you' enough, right?

ELIZABETH
(honestly)
I think that's the first time I ever heard you say it. When it wasn't to your car or your records...

The statement hangs there, as Elizabeth sees Todd. She motions him over.

ELIZABETH
Okay. Okay. Here he is. Todd!

Frank stiffens, looks straight ahead as he waits for Todd to arrive.

TODD
'lo.

Frank turns to see that Todd is 18. He wears a backpack. He is muscular with a stone-face. He swings the backpack off his shoulder.

TODD
Hi Liz.

FRANK
You're Todd?

TODD
Yes I am. And you would be...

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Is this my life? Is this really happening? This guy is 12.

FRANK
Frank.

Todd sits down next to Elizabeth. He's intense.

TODD
I love her, sir. It just happened.

FRANK
It happened to me. And don't call me sir.

ELIZABETH
I don't think anyone's not hurting here.

Frank leans back in his seat.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Bullshit. We never really loved each other. We just shared the emotional rent.

TODD
We wanted you to understand.

FRANK
I don't even have a say in this, right? It just "happened", and I'm supposed to understand.

Todd thinks about it, nods.

TODD
We hoped you would.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
This relationship will last two minutes.

He watches as Todd can't help but put his arm around Elizabeth.

TODD
Those earrings are incredible.

ELIZABETH
(can't help but glow)
Oh, you like them?

Frank's watches her response to this simple comment about her earrings.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I never even noticed her earrings, not once.

ELIZABETH
I'm glad we can all sit here and attempt to talk it out.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
When it's the right girl, you notice things like earrings.

TODD
So let's talk about it.

FRANK
Listen. I came here with a plan to argue this out, maybe win you back. But now it's late and I see you together and I have to get back to work so I'll just say this.
(firmly, to Todd)
Fuck you.
(to Elizabeth)
And good luck.

TODD
Thanks.

ELIZABETH
Thank you, Frank.

TODD
You're a good man.

Frank sits staring at them. He shakes his head.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Yeah. I'm a good man. But I'm single.

He grabs his keys, as we hear the swinging sound of Tony Bennett's "Taking a Chance on Love", over...

TITLE SEQUENCE

1) Frank drives his new-model Fed-car Ford through the rainy streets of the Seattle University district. Most of his belongings in the back.

2) Frank moves his belongings into The House, a roomy place near the University of Washington. He's guided to his room by two buddies, both 24. They are Joey Novak, always talking and gesturing, and Kent Byers, silent and tranquil in unfaded Levi's and cotton shirt. A banner hangs across the door to the room--'WELCOME BACK'.

3) A downtown bus carries Safe Sex tips on its side. The bus moves, revealing Frank sitting alone on the bench.

4) A hand crosses several names out of a small black phone book, circles several others.

5) Frank and Joey watch a television newscast. A newscaster reports soundlessly. Over his shoulder is a projected drawing of a couple. As he speaks, the international 'no' line crosses over them.

6) Frank at the end of a date, leans forward to kiss his companion. She shakes his hand.

7) Frank eyes a girl in the car beside him. She gives him nothing, pulls away to reveal a license plate reading: EZ NO MORE.

8) Frank reads a magazine. He sees a print ad for 'The New Modest Bikini'. It looks almost like long underwear.

9) Frank at the end of another date. He leans forward to kiss his companion. She doesn't even shake hands. She playfully knocks him on the shoulder with her fist.

10) Frank unpacks a box of books, finds a copy of How to Pick Up Women. He tosses it in the wastebasket.

11) Frank tucks his shirt in, zips his zipper up with an air of finality as we END MUSIC.

INT. THE HOUSE - MORNING

We move down the hallway, past the stolen street signs, past a large poster of Paulina Porizkova, past several warring patches of wallpaper, into Frank's room.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM

Frank is sleeping in a room still crowded with unpacked boxes. The clock-radio clicks on and it's very loud.

RADIO
Good morning. It's 8:15...are you considering high-risk intimacy? Think no more about standing in line for the kind of protection that can take the question and embarrassment out of 'I love you'. Johnson Delivery can bring contraceptives to your home or office, making your high-risk intimacy a...

Frank's hand reaches for the radio, slams down the off button.

INT. MERRILL LYNCH OFFICE - LATER MORNING

The elevator opens on the eighth floor. Frank exits. He's well-dressed, a model young businessman. He turns, walks down the main

aisle. Executive assistants nods, say hello. Frank turns into the coffee room.

INT. COFFEE ROOM

Three older brokers nod hello to Frank, who helps himself to some coffee.

BROKER # 1
Looks like you're not the youngest broker anymore, Frank.

BROKER # 2
Chuck Fisher is his name.

BROKER # 2
He's got those eyebrows. Those ambitious eyebrows.

FRANK
Who are we talking about?

BROKER # 2
The new guy. He won the college sponsorship program.

Kent, Frank's low-key roommate, joins the group. Like Clutch Cargo, his lips barely move as he speaks.

KENT
Two years ago. Two years ago, you won that.

Kent moves to get some water. He washes the faucet knobs before and after using them.

FRANK
Kent, why don't you face up to the fact that the world is full of germs.

The notion makes Kent ill, as Chuck enters. Chuck is good-looking, intense. He's already been at work for hours. As he talks, we view the faces of the others. They look at Frank with mournful eyes.

ALL
Hi Chuck.

CHUCK
Frank Walker? Chuck Fisher. You are my hero. I want to be you. I want your reputation. I have a feeling we're the same guy, a few years apart.

FRANK
What is my reputation?

CHUCK
The Honest Face. The rapport with the investors. You make friends with them! It's brilliant!

INT. FLAPPER'S - NIGHT

The Cure's "Why Can't I Be You" plays from the loud stereo system. Frank and Joey hold beers, survey the scene at this upscale young bar. Frank is preoccupied, Joey is in mode. He looks like Elvis in Spinout--a ready smile, a slight smirk, slicked black hair.

ANGLE ON JOEY'S TRADEMARK. He holds his cigarette between his third and fourth fingers.

FRANK
There's a new guy in my department.

JOEY
I'm telling you. Monday night is the happening night. The amateurs only come out on weekends. Monday night is pro night...

FRANK
He wants my job.

JOEY
To your left. Green jacket. The girl is checking me out.

FRANK
Joey, you know what...

JOEY
She's gorgeous. Let's dialogue with her.

FRANK
You know what I think?

JOEY
Don't think, just look.

FRANK
Joey, I'm going to be different. I'm going to be celibate for awhile.

JOEY
Good. You should celebrate more often.

FRANK
I'm serious, Joey. Celibate. I need to concentrate on work.

JOEY
Celibate, as in no sex?

FRANK
As in no high-risk intimacy.

JOEY
(always scanning)
Drastic.

FRANK
It was easier in college. We were all together, stuck together. Now we're just people.

Two girls pass, ignore them.

FRANK
And with everything that's going on now...I mean, sex is great but it's not worth dying for.

JOEY
Got something better?

FRANK
I don't have a trust fund. I have to work.

JOEY
I know you, for a long time. You're a solid guy. You return the carts to the store when you go to the grocery store. You feel things. Stop moping about Elizabeth. You two were like this.

Joey holds a finger from each hand, points them in different directions.

FRANK
I think I'm having my first mid-life crisis.

JOEY
You'll find your answer at the 7th Brew.

FRANK
Seven beers will not change my mind.

Joey sees two cute girls standing nearby. Joey gives Frank a watch-me look, steps over to the girls. He clears his throat softly, the signal that a line is coming.

JOEY
Girls, we may be total strangers, but don't you get the feeling we'd be really, really good together? The two of you, and the two of us... I don't know about you, but I feel the magic.

The girls smile politely, and flee back to their group of friends.

JOEY
I need new lines. I need new nineties lines. See Frank--women don't want 'dangerous' anymore. They want 'safe', which is tough for me.

FRANK
I'm serious, Joey.

JOEY
(serious)
Hey, this isn't my decade either. But you don't see me giving up.

FRANK
Let's just have a good time, no pressure.

JOEY
Just be glad your father didn't go through this phase.
(looking around club)
You would have ended up in a Kleenex.

And Joey moves off, beer and cigarette in hand.

INT. SUPERMARKET ("THE STOCK MARKET") - NIGHT

We hear the dramatic Tom Jones classic "I (Who Have Nothing)" playing over the supermarket sound system. Frank shops for one.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I roll down the aisle.

He passes the spices.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
With Elizabeth, there were priorities. Health. Grains. Fresh, green food.

He keeps rolling.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Now there is only one priority. Whatever's easy.

He turns the corner, nears the frozen food section.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I come face-to-face with the enemy. This. This is the price I pay for not being able to say 'I Love You'.

He stops in front of the Stoffer's Frozen Food. As the Jones song reaches it's operatic climax, Frank slowly and inexorably reaches for the Turkey Tetrazzini.

Then another hand reaches in, grabs a package. Frank turns and sees Patty Delaney, 24. She's pretty, dressed casually. Their eyes meet. They recognize the same look on each other's faces.

FRANK
Hi.

PATTY
Hi.

INT. CHECK - OUT LINE - MINUTES LATER

Patty separates their groceries with a rubber divider.

FRANK
Did you used to go to U-W? I think I've seen you.

PATTY
I went to Emerson. In Boston.

FRANK
Boston. I knew it. What are you doing here?

PATTY
I'm an artist. My girlfriend and I came out for jobs.

FRANK
I'm a stockbroker. Don't hold that against me.

She smiles. He pays for his groceries. There's an awkward moment, broken by the automatic change machine.

AUTO VOICE
Please bag your own.

FRANK
Listen. There's lots of places you may not know about, I could show you around and...

PATTY
Sure. Let's do something.

Beat.

FRANK
I'd need your number.

She reaches in her purse and pulls out a business card.

INT. FLYER'S - NEXT DAY

Patty sits at a small desk. She designs graphics for a club handbill. Her bulletin board corner is a growing collection of designs and original card artwork. In the background, a noisy printer kicks out hundreds of fliers.

At the opposite desk is Claire Ramsey, 24. Patty's devoted best friend is a driven young businesswoman. She's stylish, works hard on her wardrobe.

CLAIRE
Strange men never ask me out in public. They ask me for directions.
(pause)
There's so much less bullshit since I started asking <u>them</u> out...

The phone rings, and Patty picks it up.

PATTY
Flyer's. This is Patty. Can I help you?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PAY PHONE

Frank stands at a roadside pay phone.

FRANK
Yes. You can go out with me tonight. It's Frank Walker. I know I just met you last night...

Patty points at the phone--it's him. Claire smiles. Her face is caught between happiness and jealousy as she listens.

PATTY
Are you suggesting that we ruin a pure meeting between two strangers?

FRANK
Tonight.

PATTY
I'm not going out right now.

FRANK
Come on.

PATTY
We'd both feel like we'd have to tell each other...

FRANK
I'm not giving up...

PATTY
...our life stories and...

FRANK
...I'm not giving up.

INT. NEPTUNE THEATRE - EARLY EVENING

They're in the upper balcony of the empty theatre, ignoring the movie.

PATTY
So I'm doing commercial art now, just to get some money with my roommate Claire. I couldn't wait to come west...my little brother came out too. He's staying with my aunt, who lives in Bellevue and that's my whole story. I love it here.

FRANK
I envy you. You get to be an artist...

PATTY
I don't know if I'm an "artist" yet. I mean commercial art is...you know, a sell-out.

As they begin to click, their banter becomes even more rapid-fire.

FRANK
Just one roommate?

PATTY
One. She thinks she's my mother.

FRANK
(points to himself)
Two. So do mine.

PATTY
House or apartment?

FRANK
House.

PATTY
Apartment.

FRANK
I like talking with you.

They smile, acknowledging the chemistry between them.

ANGLE ON PATTY who turns to the movie.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Sure. I have a friendly exterior. So do you. But it's just a matter of time. I'll learn more about you and you'll learn more about me and we'll both run shrieking back into our own personal hell.

PATTY
(blurts)
Let's go for a walk.

EXT. 45TH STREET - LATER

They walk the U district, past a couple of college waiters sitting at a bus-stop. Past the blue neon light of Easy Street.

FRANK
...and so I yelled out 'Fishbite', because I'd never been bitten while skinny-dipping--especially there. This became my nickname for years. This is not a story I tell.

PATTY
(grinning)
I'm, uh, honored.

FRANK
Now you have to tell me yours.

PATTY
Okay, my secret. Do I really?

FRANK
That was our deal.

PATTY
Alright...

FRANK
But first you have to go out with me tomorrow night.

PATTY
Oh, you think I should?

FRANK
Yes.

PATTY
Alright. Okay. Now I'll tell you my secret.
(seriously)
I'm celibate. I have been for about a year. No weird philosophies. I'm just taking a break. I'm...celibate.

Beat.

FRANK
Me too. I've been this way--officially--for two weeks. After Elizabeth, I got tired of the games.

PATTY
(shaking head)
This is unique.

They look at each other. Their instincts tell them this is the moment when most would kiss, but they don't.

PATTY
Still want to be friends?

Patty puts out her hand, Frank pauses a moment.

FRANK
Friends with potential.

They shake. Patty's impressed with this guy, as we CUT TO

INT. THE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Joey sits on their overstuffed sofa, smokes. He slowly arches an eyebrow.

JOEY
You've been duped by the whole celibacy movement.

FRANK
You'll meet her. You'll see.

JOEY
Ha.

FRANK
You know sometimes I can <u>really</u> tell your dad was an actor.

JOEY
This whole celibate thing, you know what it really means? It means 'I'm looking for a bigger fish than you'. That's what it really means. I know women.
(pause)
Did you check her pupils? The human pupil always enlarges when excited.

FRANK
Joey. I didn't check her pupils.

JOEY
Remember pre-Grad Night? U-W. Two years ago. You did a Triple Header, bro. Three girls, including Susan Stack. You wrote a short story about it and read it on the last day of Lit class. Balls. A hundred people heard it. That was <u>you</u>, my man. That was you.

FRANK
That was me.

JOEY
The tail end of the Sexual Revolution? You were <u>there</u>.

FRANK
I was there.

Joey high-fives Frank. Noise on the steps. Joey looks out the window.

FRANK
Kent's back.

JOEY
He's with the Drama Queen.

Kent walks in the door with Jennifer. Jennifer is 23, with flowing blonde hair. Kent, as always, conducts himself like a young Jack Webb.

KENT
Gentlemen.

He immediately moves to the kitchen, where he washes his hands.

FRANK/JOEY
Hey Kent. Hi.

JENNIFER
That was the worst traffic jam in history. I was so claustrophobic I couldn't breathe. I'm going to lie down and die now.

And she disappears into the bedroom with a sigh.

KENT
How's the new guy--Chuck?

FRANK
Deadly.

Kent withdraws a moist towelette, and wipes his face. It's all part of his cleansing ritual.

KENT
(terse)
I'll keep an eye on him.

Kent follows Jennifer into the bedroom and shuts the door.

JOEY
What is the International Grace Period before you can tell your roommate the truth about his girlfriend?

FRANK
Two weeks.

JOEY
Why have we waited two years?

FRANK
Because we're his friends.

Joey can accept that.

JOEY
Who would ever be attracted to a girl like that?

Frank shrugs.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Frank lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. He hears the bathroom flush, Jennifer cough. Then the door opens. We see Jennifer in the half-light. She's wearing one of Kent's shirts as a night-robe.

JENNIFER
I bet you changed your mind.

FRANK
No. As a matter of fact, I haven't.

JENNIFER
What's the matter, you can't keep a secret?

FRANK
I don't want any more secrets.

She leans down, whispers.

JENNIFER
He hardly touches me anymore.

FRANK
Don't do this to me. He's my best friend.

JENNIFER
Frank, you and I made love in this house once. You and I have shared that moment.

FRANK
It was two years ago. It was beer morality, college hormones...

JENNIFER
I love having secrets with you.

There's a movement in the hallway, she lunges back into the bathroom. Frank listens as the other door opens in the bathroom.

KENT'S VOICE
There you are.

JENNIFER'S VOICE
Hi, honey.

EXT. CAR WASH - NEXT AFTERNOON

We see a busy car wash. An attractive Woman with red hair sits leafing through a magazine, eating a piece of chocolate.

TITLE: THE PERFECT NINETIES PICK-UP LINE

Joey enters the frame, hands in pockets, feigning disinterest. He looks everywhere but at the red-head. He sits down next to her. He clears his throat softly.

JOEY
Do you know about chocolate? Chocolate is the only food that releases the same sensations, within your brain, as human love. This has been medically proven. Right now I just want to tell you something. I was driving by, and I saw you, and I had to pull over. I never...I rarely do this. But you are my ideal. The time I spent in the seminary, I had plenty of time to think about this. And I know you're feeling something too. So I'm wondering...is it the chocolate? Or is it us?

She looks at him, says nothing. So Joey continues.

JOEY
I know you probably get approached by a million guys, but I'd just appreciate it if you put me in a group...
(holds hand out)
...over here.

She smiles.

JOEY
And I'd like to go out to dinner with you tonight. My name is Joey Novak.

Joey cooly smokes a cigarette, in trademark fashion.

RED HEAD
Oli hauska tavata.
(broken English)
I am from Helsinki, Finland.

JOEY
Welcome to my country! Consider me your host.

RED HEAD
Thank. You.

JOEY
(acts it out)
Eat...with...me. Good guy.

She smiles, nods.

RED HEAD
You must.

JOEY
Yes. "You must..."

RED HEAD
Know my.

JOEY
"Know my..."

RED HEAD
Married one.

They are joined by her husband, who is large and foreign and jocular. She points excitedly to Joey.

RED HEAD
Nautimme kovasti leskelustamme "good guy".

HUSBAND
Good guy! Let's eat.

Joey wears a grim smile.

INT. PATTY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Patty is trying to find the proper outfit. A pile of clothes rests on her bed. The phone rings, she picks it up and says:

PATTY
Aaaaaaa! I can't find the...

CLAIRE'S VOICE
Nothing too body-conscious. Wear your black skirt, with your black tights, black boots, your white blouse, tweed jacket. It looks so classy. Oh, and your white pearl earrings.

PATTY
You're the best.

She hangs up smiling. She digs for the outfit--it's somewhere near the bottom of the pile.

INT. CAFE - EVENING

Frank and Patty sit at a small table, drinking coffee. A partition separates them from the next table, where a young couple makes out passionately. Every few moments, the couple breaks and says "I love you" loudly. Frank and Patty try to ignore them, then:

FRANK
People sure throw that phrase around. They don't mean it when they say it.

PATTY
One person says it, and then if the other doesn't say it...it's a game.

FRANK
Exactly.

But they can't take their eyes off the other couple.

EXT. PIER 54 - LATER EVENING

Frank and Patty zig-zag slowly along the pier. They finish ice creams bought from a stand, toss the wrappers into garbage bins.

PATTY
I feel fat.
(laughs)
Never said that on a "date" before.

FRANK
You look great.

She pretends to shrug off the compliment.

FRANK
I have a theory. I say there's a finite number of pounds in the universe. For every pound you lose, someone has to gain...and because

of you, there's probably a very fat person somewhere. Because you're fine.

Patty loves it.

FRANK
Here. Let me just steer you into this vat of clams...

He grabs her, she yelps and wrenches out of his reach.

HIGH ANGLE as he chases her along the pier.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
He touched me. I like that he touched me. It's too early to feel this. What does my conscience say?
(pause)
Try the Sneeze Test. If he doesn't say "bless you", it's a tip-off.
(pause)
Why do I make these rules for myself?

EXT. STREET - LATER

Patty appears to shake off a bad chill, as she and Frank walk along. They bump against each other lightly.

FRANK
All three of us were in the Communications Dept. at UW. Then Kent did so well that Merrill Lynch approached him, and he had be apply for their sponsorship program and...

PATTY
You got sidetracked by the money.

FRANK
Well, I wouldn't put it like that.

PATTY
You always apologize for being a stockbroker.

FRANK
You know what? I wrote a book in high school. Two hundred-and-two pages. Wrote it in a weekend, at my Uncle's cabin.

PATTY
What was it called?

FRANK
My Life and Other Obstacles.
I sent it to J.D. Salinger.

PATTY
Really? What did he do?

FRANK
He sent it back.

They pass a car showroom window.

FRANK
Do you know how to drive a stick?
I never learned how.

PATTY
Seriously? I'll borrow Claire's car.
I'll teach you tomorrow night.

He nods. A deal. They stop by a bench. Patty sits down. Frank sits down a comfortable distance away from her.

FRANK
It's nice to not have to worry
about making some kind of...first move.

PATTY
Oh, I know! I'd be nervous about
when you'd make it and...yeah. It's
great not to worry about this stuff.

FRANK
Definitely.

PATTY
Oh look! Aren't those great letters
on that chicken stand?

She points to something across the street. They turn away from each other, look at a chicken stand.

FRANK
Those are great letters.

She touches his leg.

PATTY
They are, aren't they?

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
She touched my leg. A simple, casual
move.

He turns to her, smiles. She smiles back.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
On the other hand, it's the International Signal. A signal that means now is your time. If I wait a minute longer, we will have slipped over the Pal Line.

Slowly, Frank moves closer to her face, closer, closer until he's inches in front of her.

EXTREME CLOSE ANGLE ON PATTY'S FACE and they've never been this close. There's terror in her eyes. Her pupils are pin-points.

EXTREME CLOSE ANGLE ON FRANK'S FACE. He stops right in front of her, holds back from the kiss.

FRANK
(casually)
How are you doing?

PATTY
Fine.

FRANK
Me too.

He slowly pulls back from the almost kiss and looks straight ahead. She sits next to him, doing the same thing. Patty sneezes.

FRANK
Bless you.

Patty wipes her nose. Then she grabs him and kisses him. A great first kiss.

INT. EL TORITO MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

The five roommates--Patty, Frank, Claire, Joey and Kent--share a booth. There is awkward silence.

TITLE: MEETING THE ROOMMATES

The silence continues for ten more seconds, until a Mariachi band arrives at their table and starts to play "Feelings". As we CUT TO

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEXT DAY

Claire's car lurches across the parking lot.

PATTY'S VOICE
Ease it out. Ease it out...

The car rolls over a cement block.

FRANK'S VOICE
I'm getting there.

PATTY'S VOICE
You know, Claire really did like your roommates.

FRANK'S VOICE
No, I think we all had a great time. Joey's in love.

PATTY'S VOICE
Oh God.

FRANK'S VOICE
He got every great girl in college, and now he gets nobody...he's got a rep.

Frank grinds the clutch.

PATTY'S VOICE
Just dusting off the gears, right?

FRANK'S VOICE
(laughing)
Yeah.

PATTY'S VOICE
Frank. I feel great with you. I think we should get a test, or whatever it is you do now, because...I know it's not very romantic, but...I mean, I've been out of touch, but I think we should be together.

The car stops.

FRANK'S VOICE
I thought you'd never ask.

INT. CAR

Patty and Frank kiss, and it's major.

PATTY
I like taking it slow, don't you?

They kiss again, as we CUT TO

INT. AM/PM - AN HOUR LATER

Rude fluorescent lighting. Frank stands nervously at the front counter. He taps a bell. Outside, we can see Patty fidgeting in the car. Out of the back walks the AM/PM Clerk. He is an earnest young American Indian, his hair tied in a pony tail.

CLERK
Yes.

FRANK
Pack of Trojans, please.

CLERK
Trojans. No.

FRANK
Well...

CLERK
Everything else, yes.

He moves aside, and with the sweep of his hand he shows that the condom selection is more varied than the cigarette display.

SLOW PAN ACROSS THE WIDE SELECTION OF CONDOMS

They all seem to feature a drawing of a woman with flowing hair being caressed by a man who looks like John Davidson.

CLERK'S THOUGHTS
(rapidly, like an arms dealer)
We have Mentor, Scentor, Triple-X, Fourex, Ramsey's Extra. We have Excita, Excita Regular, Excita Extra. Natural skin, lambskin, golden-skin. Ultra-ribbed, no-ribbed, reservoir tip, extension tip, spermicide tip. We have Klingtite, Fit-Tite, Reasons, Seasons, Visions and Sheik Elite.

FRANK
(eager to exit)
Visions. Give me Visions.

The Clerk places a 10-pack on the counter. Frank reaches for his wallet.

CLERK
You want video? We have Lethal Weapon, Cherry High, Purple Rain, Jane Fonda...

Frank shakes his head--no--as he pays the clerk. The clerk snaps back Frank's change in an instant.

CLERK
Enjoy.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Frank bustles about, cleaning up the room as Patty looks intently through his records. She turns, catches his look. They both have to laugh at the meaningless nervous activity. Frank puts on a vintage soul record.

FRANK
Yeah, most of my records are r&b.
That's my favorite kind of music...

PATTY
What about this?

She pulls out his copy of Jackie Gleason's She Left Me.

FRANK
There are nights when that's all
I want to hear.

Patty laughs self-consciously, as he sits down beside her.

FRANK
We don't have to "do" anything,
you know.

PATTY
I get so nervous...does everybody
in the world go through this?

FRANK
No, just us.

He kisses her. She reaches over, and grabs the bag. He takes out the package of Visions.

INSERT OF THE VISIONS BOX which is uniquely cheesy, featuring a strange-looking couple on the front.

PATTY
Her name is Wanda.

FRANK
Bill.

PATTY
I don't trust them.

FRANK
Neither do I.

They laugh. He turns the box over. It's an entry panel for a contest involving a World Cruise. The box falls apart. A clock chimes in the next room.

FRANK
Look. We both have to work tomorrow. Let's do this another night, real soon.

PATTY
Real soon.

He stands, helps her to her feet.

INT. MERRILL LYNCH COFFEE ROOM - NEXT DAY

Kent catches Frank alone in the coffee room. Kent is in combat-stockbroker mode. As he talks, he vigorously wipes his hands with a moist towelette.

KENT
Facts. Chuck's after your job.

FRANK
He's only been here two months!

KENT
Facts. He wrote a research report--it says you're not making expenses.

FRANK
That blowfish. I'll...

KENT
No. I took care of it. They're going to ask you to go to a weekend seminar. That's it. You gotta make 5000 to cover your desk, chief.

FRANK
I will. You know I will.

KENT
Facts. I'd put some of your people into AT&T and the Baby Bells. They're making money faster than the mint. If you need anything else--snap--I'm there.
(pause)
Do I seem tense?

FRANK
I'd be worried if you weren't.

Kent pats him on the shoulder, takes off. Frank is concerned.

INT. FLYER'S - AFTERNOON

Hundreds of handbills kick out of the printer.

PATTY
You want a Coke or something, from across the street?

CLAIRE
Are you hungry already?

TITLE: CHOCOLATE

PATTY
Yeah.

CLAIRE
I'm fine. You're always thinking of ways to go across the street. Look--you don't have any new designs.

Patty reflects on the lack of material in her display corner.

PATTY
You're not really mad at that, right? You're mad at something else.

CLAIRE
Why are we going to Frank's house for dinner? We hated each other the first time. And Joey...

PATTY
Why don't you like him?

CLAIRE
He's so aggressive.

Patty gives her a look.

CLAIRE
He's like an Iguana in heat.

PATTY
(smiling)
I don't want to go alone. Be my bud.

CLAIRE
And you talk differently now. You pro-nounce everything. What happened to my bud?

PATTY
You only like me when I'm depressed.

CLAIRE
You know I'm happy for you. I like you better than I like me.

Patty looks at her--then go with me.

CLAIRE
Okay. Chocolate. As soon as either of us wants to go, we mention chocolate.

They shake.

PATTY
And I'll get more work done. Promise.

INT. THE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Music plays inside the house. Dinner is over. Dishes are being carried into the kitchen. Joey takes Frank aside in a corner of the living room.

JOEY
I'm deep into Claire. She rocks my world.

He grabs his crotch, as Patty takes a surprise Sure Shot photo of the two guys.

PATTY
I'd better take another one.

JOEY
Sorry.

She takes another picture of Frank, who grabs it and takes one of her. They both walk outside to the porch, to sit with the others.

EXT. PORCH

In the half-light, it's easier for everyone to talk. Joey settles into a seat near Kent, opens a Corona beer and squeezes lime over the top. The lime squirts Kent, who wipes it off and seethes quietly. Jennifer joins everyone on the porch, flaps her arms.

JENNIFER
I just want to fly away on a night like this. Whoosh!

Claire shoots a look at Patty. Joey scoots closer to Claire, which makes her immediately nervous.

KENT
I received something odd in the mail today.

PATTY
What's that?

KENT
(intense)
I received an invitation to join a club where everyone had an AIDS-Free card. Is that what you want to tell your kid? Mom and Dad met at the AIDS-FREE club?

PATTY
(laughs)
How unromantic.

KENT
I consider it a violation of my mailbox.

JOEY
(as in shut up)
Pass the candle, Kent.

He gives him a look, which Kent misses.

KENT
I can't even look at old movies anymore. I look at a Michelob ad, and I think about AIDS. There has been such a media bombardment.

CLAIRE
But it's educated the people.

FRANK
I agree.

JOEY
Would you like something to drink?

KENT
Television is so powerful, so irresponsible. We dissected 30 days of TV at school. It's a teeming salesman, sending mixed signals to a nation of illiterates. Sure, they'll educate on the subject of AIDS but then what follows it? A re-run of Three's Company.

JOEY
No more coffee for this man.

PATTY
But it's so true.

JOEY
Frank, give me a hand inside.

Frank gets up. Kent keeps talking. He's strangely passionate.

KENT
Why can't people just be responsible and keeping their world clean...

The girls are fascinated.

INT. KITCHEN

Joey is pissed-off, whispering loudly to Frank.

JOEY
Every time I'm moving on a girl, Kent finds a way to talk about AIDS.

FRANK
It's on his mind.

JOEY
His mind is cutting in on my action.

FRANK
He's our landlord. We've known him since he was 8. He picks at you, but he'd do anything for you. He got me my job...

JOEY
Which you don't want.

FRANK
Give it a rest, Joey.

JOEY
You're always the diplomat, always the peacemaker.
(pause)
This girl isn't going for me, is she?

Frank shakes his head--no.

JOEY
The shoes aren't happening, right? It's the shoes.

Frank looks down at Joey's pastel saddle shoes as we CUT TO

EXT. PORCH

Joey and Frank return.

KENT
(very intense)
...the body is a dinosaur. Soon we'll just be brains, in a saline solution...

FRANK
Kent, let's move the topic along.

CLAIRE
(elitist)
Flannery O' Connor has a story about the day we all become a gleaming mass, marching with pigs on a path to heaven.

JOEY
"Revelation", right?

Everybody looks at Joey, who is smiling.

JOEY
I happen to know this book.

He inches closer to Claire.

CLAIRE
Uh, great.

JOEY
(intellectual)
I feel--contrary to O' Connor, in that piece--that it's good to be happy, because happy is better than being depressed.

He touches her arm. Claire looks uncomfortable.

CLAIRE
Do you guys have any chocolate?

JOEY
I think we have some chocolate ice cream.

KENT
I ate it. Sorry.

JOEY
You don't have anything stashed, do you Frank?

FRANK
Nothing.

CLAIRE
Too bad. I was really starting to think about chocolate.

Patty either misses or pretends not to hear the hint. She's focused on Frank, who pours coffee.

PATTY
I blame the remote control for most modern problems. When people got remote controls for their t.v.s, their attention spans shortened. Society deteriorated, the arts deteriorated... I'll have some more coffee, sure.

FRANK
I like this theory.

CLAIRE
Have you seen that movie on cable, Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory? I guess my mind is really on CHOCOLATE.

Patty looks at her watch.

PATTY
Oh! That's right. We'd better go.

FRANK
Right now? Really?

PATTY
We have work tomorrow.

Everyone tries to convince the girls to stay, as Frank and Patty conduct an eye-contact discussion. Do you really have to go? Yeah, I should.

CLAIRE
We really have to go.

And they do. As soon as they disappear around the corner, Joey bends down to Kent.

JOEY
And if you hadn't stolen my chocolate ice cream, those babes would have stayed.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Patty and Claire walk to Claire's car. Patty stops.

PATTY
Tell me again why I shouldn't go back.

CLAIRE
Because you'll have no mystery.

PATTY
You're right.

Patty starts walking again, then stops.

PATTY
But if I like him, why do I have to be mysterious? You're never mysterious.

CLAIRE
(passionate)
I know you, okay? I nursed you through Greg, and Bart, and don't forget the man who caused you to abandon the entire Eastern seaboard--Evil Todd.

Patty shivers.

CLAIRE
You always end up the "pal", and I'm not going to let that happen to you again. If you stay over tonight, you'll wash dishes, you'll clean up, soon you'll be House Mascot. He's got to come to you now. Two phone calls. Don't return the first one because you're too much in demand. The second one, pounce on. You'll thank me.

PATTY
Thank you.

And the two friends hug in the middle of the street.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NEXT DAY

Frank, Joey and Kent play against three younger street players. The younger players score the winning basket, and the game breaks up. Kent falls onto the bench, followed by the other two.

JOEY
Those guys kicked our ass.

KENT
Because you smoke too much.

FRANK
Fuck it. It's a game.

Kent stands up, and suddenly beats his chest. It's a glimpse of someone else, and then sits down again.

KENT
Guys, Jennifer and I are going to get married. I asked her last night, after dinner. I can't hold it back anymore.

Joey looks at Frank who looks at Kent, who looks at them oddly.

KENT
I'm serious. What do you think?

JOEY
Drastic.

FRANK
(unconvincing)
Congratulations.

KENT
I've known you guys, what--16 years. I think I deserve a bigger reaction than this.

FRANK
Kent...

KENT
I mean, this is a happy moment for me.

FRANK
Do you feel like you know this girl?

KENT
I know you don't "get" Jennifer, but I do. And she likes you both, especially you.

He pats Frank. Joey thrusts out his hand. It's a dirty and sweaty.

JOEY
You're a bold man, and I salute you and I want to shake your hand.

FRANK
I'm happy for you, Kenny.

Frank puts out his own dirty hand. Kent looks at their hands, opts for grabbing them both around the shoulders.

OTHER PLAYERS
Let's go again!

Kent springs up, jubilant, leaving Joey and Frank to share separate dark looks.

INT. CAR - NEXT AFTERNOON

Patty drives. Claire is in the passenger seat. She's glum.

CLAIRE
I told Mikey I'd see him tonight.

PATTY
That's sweet. He adores you.

Claire turns her back to the car door, and settles in for the tale.

CLAIRE
Then yesterday Tom called and left a message on the machine. He asked me out for tonight. And I called back, and told his friend to tell him yes.

Patty is confused.

PATTY
So did you call Mikey?

Outside the window on Claire's side, Joey appears in his customized Chevy Nova.

CLAIRE
I was just about to, and the phone rang.

Claire takes a dramatic pause.

CLAIRE
Bill's back. He's in from the Greenpeace Project for one night, and he wrote me those letters, and I have to see him. Even though it's completely physical.
(meaningfully)
I need to see him.
(pause)
Even though he still has that hang-up about going down on me.

PATTY
Put on something you both can watch. Put on "The Way We Were".

CLAIRE
Hmmmmm.

As Claire talks, Joey weaves through traffic to stay alongside. He motions for Claire to roll down the window. Patty sees it, Claire does not.

PATTY
Claire, right outside your window...

CLAIRE
Wait, so I called Mikey and Tom and told them my mother was sick and I had to go over and visit her. And she is sick so it's not completely a lie. I just didn't mention that she lives in Boston. I know this is going to be a disaster.

PATTY
No, it's...

Joey honks. Claire continues.

CLAIRE
Whenever I get a guy, everything else collapses, but it doesn't matter because everything is always collapsing anyway.

PATTY
There is a guy who really likes you, Claire, and he's right outside your window.

CLAIRE
I know I know. You always say that metaphysical stuff, you always try to make me feel better...

PATTY
No. There is a guy outside your window. Literally. Joey.

Claire turns, sees him and immediately ducks down.

PATTY
Be nice.

Claire eases up, rolls down the window.

JOEY
I dreamed about you last night! Let's go out!

CLAIRE
I've got three dates tonight!

JOEY
I'll come by late!

CLAIRE
I'm sorry! This is our turn-off!

Patty shakes her head, turns off. Claire is suddenly dour.

CLAIRE
I bet all these guys cancel on me tonight.

And we CUT TO...

INT. HALLWAY

Patty knocks on Claire's door. Lightly, but furiously.

TITLE: WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Claire opens the door. "The Way We Were" plays in the background. Claire's smiling, and it's a unique sight.

PATTY
I hate to do this to you in your moment of bliss, but Mikey is here with flowers. He said you cancelling his date was the best talk he'd ever had with you. And Tom has called twice. I think he's coming over.

CLAIRE
(panicked)
Where do they think I am?

PATTY
At the hospital, with your mother.
And Joey keeps calling from his car phone.

CLAIRE
Oh God! Why did I do this?

PATTY
Shhhh! I'll cover for you. I'm
just such a bad liar.

The doorbell rings. Both girls freeze, cover each other's mouths and scream.

PATTY
(yells)
I'll get it Mikey!

BILL'S VOICE
Who's Mikey?

Patty rushes down the hallway, into the living room where Mikey sits crammed into a small chair. He holds flowers. He is a 6'7 guy with two different-colored pupils.

PATTY
Mikey--go to the kitchen. I'll
be right back.

She opens the door.

EXT. DOORWAY - NIGHT

It's a wiry New Yorker with curly hair. He is Tom.

TOM
I have to see Claire. Have to.

PATTY
She's out. She's gone. Her mother
is dead.

TOM
I may be back.

She smiles politely, shuts the door and bolts it.

PATTY
Just a minute, Mikey!

She returns to the back bedroom.

CLAIRE
Who was that?

PATTY
Just have a good time with Bill.
And be quiet for the next few minutes,
while I figure out what to tell Mikey.

She musses Claire's hair, and exits. As Claire disappears back inside the room:

BILL'S VOICE
Who's Mikey?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Patty returns to the living room.

MIKEY
What's going on?

He's a sincere, give-it-to-me straight guy.

PATTY
Claire's old boyfriend came back
to town and they're here right now
and she's too shy to tell you that
because she really likes you a lot
and doesn't want to hurt your
feelings. But I know you can take
it. I can't lie to you.

Mikey takes the news stoically.

MIKEY
I wish you would have lied to me.

PATTY
Her mother is sick though.

MIKEY
Then she can keep the flowers.

PATTY
Sorry, Mikey. You know I'm rooting for you.
(squeezes arm)
But I'm going to bed. So I better...

MIKEY
Yeah I know.

He doesn't move.

MIKEY
What about you? Are you available?

PATTY
Goodnight, Mikey.

She leads him to the door. He exits. She shuts the lights out in the living room. Patty listens to him leave. She walks down the hallway and taps once on the door. She walks down the silent hallway and into the darkened living room, sits down and contemplates the evening. There is a knock at the door, and Patty chooses to ignore it. Then another knock.

EXT. DOORWAY

Frank Walker gives up, pauses once to look at the darkened house, walks back to his car. He's carrying chocolates.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I'm glad she's not home. Can't tip the balance of power. I already left one message, and she didn't call me back. Joey's right. It's a war. I'll eat these myself. She's probably out with someone else anyway. It's her move.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Patty sits in the dark.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Go away. Should I call Frank? Hmmm.
(pause)
No. If I try too hard for this guy, I'll be like every desperate girl in the world. I'll be one of those self-sufficient girls with leathery skin and body-conscious clothes and ski racks on the top of her car.
(pause)
Call me one more time, Frank, and I'll give you the best night of your life.

EXT. DOORWAY

Frank considers ringing one more time, and doesn't. He leaves.

INT. THE HOUSE/KITCHEN - NEXT EVENING

We hear the music of James Brown's "This is a Man's, Man's, Man's World" as we slowly pan across the ruins of the sink. Two days worth of meals and dishes...

We arrive at Joey's side. Frank watches as Joey prepares a microwave specialty.

JOEY
How'd the market close?

FRANK
(laughing)
What do I look like, a stockbroker?

JOEY
This celibacy thing has made you weird, man.

Joey takes a casserole dish, places in it layers of food--first crackers, then pre-sliced cheese, and jalapenos.

JOEY
So it's been--what--a week since you talked to Patty?

FRANK
Four days.

JOEY
Four days is big.

FRANK
She's got another guy. I can feel it.

Frank watches as Joey adds semi-cooked burger and tomato sauce. Joey places the dish in the microwave, with a flourish. He turns it on.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE DISH as we watch it melt through the wonder of microwave.

JOEY
I refuse to get involved...but it's Saturday night, right? Call her number. If she has a serious guy, then she's out.

FRANK
I just want to do this right.

Joey hands Frank the phone.

JOEY
Call. I'll set the table.

Frank dials the number from a piece of paper, puts it on speaker phone.

CLAIRE'S MACHINE
Hi, this is Claire and if you're calling for Patty or me, we'll be at The Goldrush. (Beep)

Joey gives Frank an are-we-happening-or-what look as the microwave dings.

FRANK
Are we going to eat this?

JOEY
No.

EXT. GOLDRUSH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The parking lot is full. There is a cacophony of tens of different warring car stereos. A long line heads up to the door, where Mikey is bouncer.

INT. GOLDRUSH - SERIES OF SHOTS

It's a big, two-tiered club. It's packed. We hear the loud music of Gene Loves Jezebel's "Heartache". Frank and Joey walk through.

FRANK
(yelling)
This club is happening!

JOEY
When it's this happening, it means the yups are here, which means next week it'll be dead!

They look around for the girls, and don't notice...

ANGLE ON PATTY who sits on the corner bar stool, in the shadows. It's the perfect vantage point on the club. Unfortunately, her view is blocked by a "hip" yup ("Guy") who is too old for this club. He sits on the next stool.

GUY
I've got to tell you. The best thing about working with stereo equipment is cracking that box open and smelling the gear.

PATTY
My boyfriend says that.

GUY
Oh really? Is he around?

PATTY
Not right now. He's...getting his steroid shots.

Claire joins them.

CLAIRE
No messages on the machine.
(cheerfully)
Are you thinking about...

PATTY
Chocolate? Yes!

GUY
Me too.

PATTY
Gotta go.

They leave. Guy instantly starts scanning the club for another girl. Joey enters--with Frank--from the other direction. He sits down next to Guy, scans the club. Misses the girls. Guy swivels around and faces Joey. They recognize the same predatory look on each other's faces. They both swivel away.

ANGLE ON THE FILM PROJECTOR BANK with four wall-projectors showing four different programs--I Spy, Room 222, Magnum Force--criss-crossing in the air over the club.

Patty and Claire climb the winding stairway to the second floor. Claire stops a Good-looking Guy on his way down the stairs. He is wearing a plain white t-shirt.

CLAIRE
I really like your t-shirt.

GOOD LOOKING GUY
Oh thanks.

He gives her the brush-off, breezes past her.

CLAIRE
He was married. I checked the left hand. Tan-line.

PATTY
Nice flank, though.

PASSING GIRL
Some bitch burned me!

Claire spots the guys. They don't see her.

CLAIRE
There they are. I told you those hang-ups were Frank.

PATTY
Wait. Let's just watch him for a minute.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE VIDEO TRIVIA GAME and the question is: What is a tutu?

a) A religious distinction.

b) A ballet dress.

c) A flute.

JOEY
Did I rock the parking lot, or what? Is this phone number here a 2 or a 7?

FRANK
It's a vein.

JOEY
No no. It's a 7.

Joey presses b. Red letter's flash--correct!

JOEY
I'm burnin'.

FRANK
Wait. There they are. Top of the stairs.

JOEY
Okay. Look only from the corner of your eyes.

Joey and Frank look sideways.

JOEY
I told you--the roommate wants me or she wouldn't have shown up. This is my night. I'm back!

INT. TOP OF STAIRS

Frank catches up to Patty. They all feign casual interest, except Joey. In the club, the music switches from records to a loud three-piece band. Everyone must switch into hyper Yell-Speak to be heard.

FRANK
Hi!

PATTY
Oh hi!

CLAIRE
Hi!

JOEY
HEL-LO BETTY.

Frank and Patty move into the shadows to talk. The two coaches watch their players for a moment, then Joey turns to Claire.

JOEY
I play a little guitar, you know.

She turns away, ignores Joey. She dances with herself and mouths the words to the song.

JOEY
I don't dance, but could I get you something to drink?

Patty and Frank emerge. Each give a hand signal to their roommates and exit.

CLAIRE
(cooly)
I'm fine. Thanks.

JOEY
You're looking very fine. You just...your dress and your face and your eyelashes look fine tonight.

CLAIRE
Is that all you think about? Looks. What looks fine? What about the moon, and the stars, and the rest of the world you just don't care to understand...I mean, come on. There's a world out there, Joey. Get with the program.

Joey stares at her, slugs at his beer. He smiles.

INT. BEDROOM - SEMI-DARKNESS

Frank's bedroom is dark, with a glowing stereo and the moon for light. Frank's eyes are shut, as Patty's face moves downward into a kiss. As they kiss, their hands explore each other for the first time.

FRANK
You feel so...

PATTY
You too.

FRANK
So great.

PATTY
How quiet do we have to be?

FRANK
How quiet are they?

In the living room, we hear the sound of news reports, music, Jennifer and Kent's voices and the garbage disposal.

PATTY
You look better with your hair messy.

FRANK
You like it that way?

She nods. He messes up his entire head of hair. They kiss again.

PATTY
If we...if we go any further, are you going to turn into a guy?

FRANK
I already am a guy.

PATTY
I mean a guy.

FRANK
No, you mean The All-American Male. The Insensitive Asshole.

PATTY
(loving that he said it)
Oh God!

FRANK
Hmmmmm.

PATTY
I mean, I know there's a secret school where they train all those guys...they teach you all those lines so you can...

INT. GYMNASIUM - PATTY'S FANTASY

No windows. A closed, secretive atmosphere. The gym is filled with 15 year-old boys. The teacher is The Marlboro Man. He stands before them, barking out training phrases.

TEACHER
(Patty's Voice)
Never say what you feel!

The class nods solemnly.

TEACHER
(now his voice)
Now repeat these important phrases! "I'll Call You Tomorrow!"

CLASS
I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW!

TEACHER
I'm Different From Those Guys.

CLASS
I'M DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OTHER GUYS.

TEACHER
"I'm Very Fond of You!"

CLASS
I'M VERY FOND OF YOU!

TEACHER
"Let's Get Married!"

And there is silence in the class. The teacher smiles proudly.

TEACHER
Gentlemen. Welcome to the Brotherhood.

High-fives everywhere as we CUT back to...

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM

Frank and Patty in bed. Frank rubs her back.

FRANK
Yeah. That's what it's like.

PATTY
I knew it. A little over to the right.

FRANK
But it's self-protection. How would you like to be a little guy in grade school? You don't know what it's like when...

And we CUT TO

INT. HOME ROOM - FRANK'S FANTASY

We see young Frank. He's a pale-looking 11, sitting at his desk.

FRANK'S VOICE
...every girl is more developed, more mature and taller than you. It's bizarre.

We pull back to see that the other boys in class look like him. The girls, however, are all 28, bored and dressed-to-kill, as we CUT BACK to

INT. BEDROOM

Frank and Patty enjoying the argument.

FRANK
And when you ask them out, they laugh and introduce you to their boyfriend in college with a Corvette.

PATTY
(laughing)
Okay. We're even. We're even.

She turns around, kisses him. Things quickly become passionate.

FRANK
I think we're going to fit great together.

PATTY
Look. I went and got some different protection.

FRANK
I did too.

PATTY
Because I don't want to get back on the pill right now.

FRANK
I have a confession to make. I've never been able to use one of these. I'm a social outcast, I'm terrible, I'm awful, but I had a bad experience with one of these once and...I couldn't get it to work.

PATTY
You couldn't get a rubber to work?

FRANK
I forgot to bring a megaphone, but if you cupped your hands you could probably say it louder.

PATTY
Oh come on. Leave it to me. I think I can make it fun for you.

FRANK
I'll get my brand.

They kiss, feel each other, as Frank's hand reaches onto the bedstand. We hear the music of Ricky Nelson's "Young Emotions" as...

SLO-MOTION SHOT

His hand fumbles between remote controls and other various items on the stand...until he reaches the condom he's pre-selected. She reaches, takes it out of his hand until...

FRANK
OUCH!

PATTY
What? What?

FRANK
It snapped me.

They laugh, begin to make love with real passion until we CUT TO...

EXT. JOLLY BOY DRIVE-IN - END OF NIGHT

A dejected Joey pulls up to the fast-food intercom of Jolly Boy. He takes a sip of a Big Gulp, which sits in a dashboard holder, just above a cheap car phone.

GIRL'S VOICE
(cute)
Hi there, welcome to Jolly Boy's Burgers. Can I help you?

A smile appears on Joey's face. He pulls ahead just slightly, sees a cute Girl behind the counter. He sits a little straighter. He clears his throat slightly.

JOEY
I don't know if you can see the moon from where you're sitting, but it's beautiful tonight.

GIRL'S VOICE
No, I can't see it.

JOEY
(winging it)
It's funny about the moon. Some nights... the lunar pull is so strong. Tonight, for example, it's so strong that some people will probably do crazy things...and they'll never really know why. They'll never know it wasn't them. It was that fierce, romantic, shameless moon.
(pause)
I'm Joey Novak. And you are...

ANGLE ON JOLLY BOY

GUY'S VOICE
I'm Jolly Fuckin' Boy. Are you going to order or what, dick?

Joey takes a moment to compose himself.

JOEY
Yes, Jolly Boy. I'll bet you're thirsty. Here, let me give you something to drink.

Joey deftly pulls up the drink he has in his lap. He pours it into the intercom, which sputters into silence. Then Joey screams into reverse, only to see a Police car pulling into Jolly Boy behind him. He throws it into drive, shoots past the window and into the street. Joey pulls into a darkened around the corner, cuts the lights. The cop car flashes by.

Joey picks up his car phone. He dials a number.

PHONE VOICE
You've just called the 976-PARTY line...

JOEY
What's happening!

PHONE VOICES
Nothing, Joey!

He shakes his head, as we DISSOLVE TO...

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Two club-stamped hands are intertwined. One finger stirs. We move down along the arms to see Patty and Frank under the covers.

Patty's eyes pop open. Carefully, she unhooks her fingers from us, pulls on a t-shirt and walks into the bathroom. She makes no noise.

INT. FRANK'S BATHROOM

She smiles, then looks down.

It's all yellow tile and rust-stains from the bottoms of aerosol cans. A sliver of soap in the dish. A brush with some hair. A slight stubble ring in the sink. She squeezes out a little Colgate from a tube, brushes with her finger. She spits it out. Then she reaches for the Scope bottle. It is literally stuck to the tile. She pries it loose.

INT. BEDROOM

Patty exits, her hair combed. Frank is asleep. She pauses a moment to admire him. She slips back into bed.

The movement now wakes Frank up. He raises his head sleepily and looks over. She is "asleep". He carefully gets up.

INT. BATHROOM

Frank brushes his hair, slugs from the same Scope bottle.

INT. BEDROOM

He gets back in bed, just as the alarm sounds. They both "wake up".

FRANK
God, you really look great in the morning.

PATTY
Oh, thanks.

INT. FLYER'S - MORNING

Claire attempts to make coffee to loud music. The door opens and Patty walks in on a cloud.

PATTY
I brought this for you.

She produces a small bouquet of flowers.

CLAIRE
(gesturing with part of coffee-maker)
Please don't do this to me. We have a business...

PATTY
I called and left a message.

CLAIRE
We have business hours. It's five after eleven. We "open" at ten.

PATTY
This is a special occasion, don't you think? And if we are our own bosses...

CLAIRE
I work harder and get less. You work less and get more...and I'm still alone.

PATTY
Finally, the truth.

Claire huffs, continues making the coffee.

PATTY
Can't you just pretend to be happy for me?

CLAIRE
You want me to be shallow.

PATTY
Oh bullshit. I just want you to swallow your jealousy and... I'm starting to think you feel hatred for me.

CLAIRE
You're crazy. That's all in your mind.

PATTY
Then why am I'm always sticking up for you? You push people away. That's why you're alone.

CLAIRE
Bitch.

PATTY
Twat.

Beat.

PATTY
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You hurt me, and I was trying to hurt you back.

CLAIRE
But "twat"!

They have to laugh.

PATTY
Can we just make an effort? Because if we can't make an effort...

Patty finishes making the coffee for Claire.

CLAIRE
No, we can. I'm sorry too.

They take a moment to regroup. Claire takes a sip of coffee.

PATTY
Aren't you going to ask me how it was?

CLAIRE
How did it go?

PATTY
Really wonderful.

CLAIRE
(strained)
I'm glad.

Patty turns, as we hear the beginning of the classic soul instrumental "Time is Tight" by Booker T. and the MG's and CUT TO

EXT. OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATRE/MERRILL LYNCH SEMINAR - DAY

Amid banners proclaiming this the "More Cluck For Their Buck" seminar, Frank sits listening and taking notes. He hates it. Patty literally hangs onto him, arms around him.

INT. PET STORE WINDOW - TWO DAYS LATER

Patty and Frank pass. She pulls him back. He wavers, almost goes in, and pulls her past. Then she appears again. And he pulls her away.

INT. OFFICE - NEXT DAY

She walks into Frank's office. He's sitting with a Client. She gives him a kiss and leaves. Frank looks puzzled, then smiles and shrugs.

INT. LIVING ROOM/THE HOUSE - EVENING

Frank walks into the living room, throws his keys on the coffee table. There is a strange feeling in the house.

Joey sits on the sofa, watching television. Kent and Jennifer stand in the hallway, caught in the middle of a Major Issue. An overnight bag sits in the living room, along with a small plant.

Patty stands by the kitchen.

PATTY
I had another fight with Claire. I can't talk with her anymore. I just...I brought some stuff over here. I drank your beer and decided you wouldn't be mad at me if I stayed here.
(shrugs)
And...you're mad.

Frank looks around to his listeners, who look quickly away. He takes the remote control and turns up the t.v. Kent and Jennifer resume their conversation. Frank motions Patty into the kitchen.

FRANK
(privately)
I'm not mad. I'm glad you're here. Because I have to...

PATTY
I'm so glad we can talk about this.

She scoots up to the countertop. He walks over to her.

FRANK
Patty--this isn't going to work.

She squints, as if she's in a dust-storm.

PATTY
Whoa. Please.

FRANK
We've crossed the Pal Line. We have.

PATTY
The Pal Line.

FRANK
We're beyond friends. But I don't think of you like a moving-in friend. Not yet. This is just a little bit fast for me.

PATTY
I never should have slept with you.

FRANK
Don't say that. Don't punish me for the other guys you've known...

PATTY
I thought we had some chemistry. I don't know. Friends with potential, right?

FRANK
Patty, when I first looked at you I fell for you so completely. And I've only come to like you more. But the last time I moved in with somebody...it didn't...I don't want this to be a rebound thing and...

PATTY
Okay. Stop. Please.

FRANK
I have a hard enough time figuring out things for one person.

PATTY
I thought you said you needed someone around. I thought it should be me. I don't like living alone either. I'm not asking you to get married, I just needed a place to stay...listen, I know when I'm not wanted.

FRANK
Easy.

PATTY
I do your stupid dishes...I take your three broken VCR's in...

FRANK
Patty, please.

PATTY
You don't need a girlfriend, you need a repairwoman.

Frank indicates the roommates, who are now courteously trying to make everything as loud as possible in the next room.

FRANK
You just want to slot me into your...

PATTY
Never mind.

Frank turns on the garbage disposal, to conceal their yelling and yells even louder.

FRANK
YOU WANT TO BELIEVE I'M AN INSENSITIVE ASSHOLE, AND I'M NOT! I'M BEING HONEST!

She starts to cry, and he turns the disposal off.

PATTY
(quietly)
All I know is that I met you, and it was pure and it was great, and everything that happened afterward

just fucked us up. And now I'm really embarrassed. I'm sorry I took up your time. I wish you'd never seen this plant.

INT. LIVING ROOM

They're all shamelessly listening, leaning closer for every nuance.

PATTY'S VOICE
I love you.

Reaction on the roommates faces. They lean even closer for a response. There is none.

PATTY'S VOICE
I'll just go. I'll go.

INT. KITCHEN

Frank holds her.

FRANK
I want you to stay.

PATTY
No. No. No.

He moves to touch her. She flails back. She motions to the other room.

PATTY
I love failing in front of everybody, too. God.

She grabs her overnight bag.

FRANK
Don't go. Come back. I'll call you later...

PATTY
"Call me later?"

Beat. She walks out. He grabs a coat to follow her, as Jennifer steps forward.

JENNIFER
As long as everyone is telling the truth here, I can't hold this back.
(dramatic pause)
Frank and I slept together. Right here, right on this floor. And now it's off my chest.

Joey looks at Frank with disbelief.

Kent looks at their faces and knows it is true.

Frank shuts his eyes in utter disbelief.

FRANK
Two years ago! It was meaningless. It was meaningless.

Jennifer goes into the bathroom, locks the door.

KENT
Meaningless enough for you to keep it a secret. Mr. Integrity. What an act.

FRANK
You know me too well to say that.

KENT
Or do I?

Joey changes channels with the remote control.

KENT
Great, Joey. Blot out the world. Put on another channel.

JOEY
Fuck you.

Frank falls into the sofa, his head in his hands. Then he looks up.

FRANK
I can't live here anymore. I'm sick of this town. I'm sick of my job! I'm sick of people! I'm sick of living here. This place is too fucking small!

KENT
Well, then maybe you should get out.

Frank goes to his room, slams the door.

EXT/INT. PATTY'S DOORSTEP/LIVING ROOM/BATHROOM - EVENING

Casey--Patty's little brother--opens the door.

FRANK
I'm Frank. I'm a friend of Patty's.

CASEY
I'm her brother Casey.

FRANK
Is she here?

CASEY
(looks around)
Not really.

FRANK
Well, when you see here, will you give her this?

Frank gives him a piece of paper.

FRANK
It's an address where I'll be. It's my uncle's cabin in Northern California. I'm going to write my book. Tell her that.

CASEY
You got it.

Frank reaches in his wallet.

FRANK
She's pretty upset with me, so give it to her at the right time--okay?

Frank gives him ten bucks. Casey's impressed, as he nods and shuts the door. He walks into the bathroom, where Patty is standing. She's obviously been crying.

CASEY
He says he's writing a book about his uncle in California.

He hands her the paper, and she rips it into a hundred pieces, throws into the toilet and flushes. The pieces circle the bowl.

CASEY
(shrugs)
Seemed like a good guy.

FADE TO:

INT. FLYER'S - DAY - SIX MONTHS LATER

Claire watches as Patty literally flies through her work. Her corner of new designs is full. She finishes a new sketch, even as we watch. Claire is clearly impressed.

INT. SUPERMARKET ("THE STOCK MARKET") - EVENING

Lobsters move slowly around the tank. Patty's face lowers into view.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I'm angry. I've turned into an angry person.

TITLE: THE DATING GAME

A happy couple walks past her.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Why did I say I'd go out with this new guy? I would do anything rather than go out on another date. Why did I say yes? To try and forget a guy who couldn't even say 'I love you'?

She arrives at the salad bar, stares at the fifty bowls of toppings.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I'll have to pick out shoes, and clothes, and eat early...so I don't look like a pig, wolfing down my food.

She rolls on, past a happy couple with a happy baby.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Why do I still come to this market?

She catches a look at herself in the mirror behind the bread.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Do I really look like that?

A Younger Guy flashes by, smiles at Patty. She rolls on.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Wait a minute. I'm still a catch. I'm a catch who's almost 25, which is the first of the Old Maid years. My problem is that I never get the guys I want. I get the guys who want me.
(pause)
Lemme see, who was the first, after Frank? Tony. Claire set me up with Tony. Of course she told him everything...

INT. ATHENIAN PIZZA - NIGHT

Patty sits across from Tony, who has smoldering good looks. A waiter passes by their table.

WAITER
Your pizza will be ready in a moment.

A long silence.

PATTY
I feel like I've been doing all the talking...what's on your mind?

Tony smiles, leans across the table.

TONY
I love you.

PATTY
Pardon me?

TONY
I LOVE YOU. I LOVE SAYING I LOVE YOU. AND I LOVE YOU.

Patty's face is frozen in shock, as we CUT TO

ANGLE ON GROCERY ITEMS flashing by.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Then there was Brian. He was already divorced, with a kid. Part of the Walking Wounded. Sensitive Guy, though...

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Sensitive-looking Brian and Patty are the last ones to leave the Mexican restaurant. Brian is looking imploringly at Patty. He's intensely fascinated.

BRIAN
I want to get at the problem between you and your family. Could we talk with your parents sometime?

PATTY
Brian--I can handle it myself. I think we'd better go.

BRIAN
Haven't you put off this confrontation long enough?

PATTY
They're kicking us out.

BRIAN
I want to get inside your head.

The lights in the restaurant shut off.

PATTY
Please. My head is full. There's no room for anybody else...

And we CUT TO...

ANGLE ON THE CHEESES

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Rick, the Human Calculator, came next...

EXT. VALET PARKING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Patty stands with Rick, waiting for his car.

RICK
Not bad for an eighty dollar meal.

The car arrives, and Rick pulls out a car alarm/trunk opener. He presses it, it sounds like an electronic re-enactment of the first six notes of Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll", as the trunk pops open.

SHOT OF THE CART MOVING SLOWLY

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Did I mention the Career Guy?

EXT. REGGAE CLUB ("THE BACKSTAGE") - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Patty and The Career Guy ("Will") leave the reggae club.

WILL
And the amazing thing is, because I'm a man and my boss is a woman, people assume that I'm having an affair with my boss, who is married, by the way...

He arrives at his car, opens his side first and reaches over to open her door as he continues talking.

WILL
...so it's a reverse sexism thing, and I can really relate to women in your position with your own successful business. Have you had to fire anybody recently? I hate doing that. You never get good at that. Let's go to my place and listen to the new R.E.M. CD...

ANGLE ON THE PRODUCE SECTION as Patty rolls by.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Then there was the Great Looking Guy, which was unique. Never been out with one of those before...

INT. SELECT GRILL - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Patty eats with the Great Looking Guy ("Ross"). He looks at her and smiles. He looks at her again, but something seems off about his stare. He's not looking directly at her. She turns around and sees that there is a mirror right behind her, and we CUT TO...

INT. STOCK MARKET

Patty has stopped in front of the Milano cookies.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I don't want romance. I want convenience.
(pause)
This will be my reward for later. When I'm home. Just me and CNN and Elsa Klensch's Style Report.

She reaches for the cookies and turns casually to see the Younger Guy checking her out. She puts the cookies back, as if she'd mistaken them for something healthful. The Guy moves on. Patty backs up and takes the cookies, as we DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. SEATTLE PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Short-bearded Frank stands in the phone booth.

FRANK
It's Frank.

TITLE: ONE YEAR LATER

FRANK
I'm back in town. Yeah. It's great. Almost done with my book. Feel stupid leaving this on a machine. I'll come see you at work.

INT. MERRILL LYNCH BUILDING - DAY

A lot of activity. Frank walks inside, wearing Levi's, a dress shirt. He walks down the aisle. Few recognize him. An Executive intercepts him.

EXEC # 1
Are you the messenger?

FRANK
No.

He walks on, arrives at Kent's office.

REBECCA
Frank Walker! It's been years!

FRANK
One year.

REBECCA
With a beard! Does Kent know you're here?

Frank shakes his head.

REBECCA
He's right down the hall.

FRANK
Thanks.

REBECCA
You're just in time for the engagement party.

FRANK
Engagement party? For Kent?

REBECCA
I thought that's why you were here...

They're interrupted by Kent, who starts to talk to Rebecca then realizes Frank's standing there. Frank looks at Kent. Kent wears a bow-tie--it's his new look. Kent looks at Frank. Can't believe the beard.

KENT
How was...

FRANK
I heard you're...

KENT
Yeah, getting married.

FRANK
You didn't...

KENT
I was going to...

FRANK
Well, who's the lucky girl?

KENT
(points across the way)
I'll let you say hello yourself.
She's in the restroom right now...

ANGLE ON THE DOOR which opens. An attractive young woman executive walks out.

Frank looks to Kent, who shakes his head--no.

KENT
A lot's changed, Frank. I gave The House to Joey.

FRANK
You gave Joey The House?

KENT
Joey's a good man. I've got him using Pine-Sol...

FRANK
So who are you m...

KENT
I love the guy, but I still can't get him off the couch. His aunt spent most of the trust fund. I advised him to sue. He didn't want to.

FRANK
Why?

KENT
It's his favorite aunt.
Was that my phone? I guess not.

FRANK
I wish you would have written me back, Kent. I feel bad about what happened, still. Is 'I'm sorry' enough, I mean...

Kent shrugs, nods.

KENT
Ancient history.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR which opens. A bookwormish girl exits. She walks toward Kent. It makes sense--this is a Kent girl.

Frank's eyes ask--her? Kent's eyes say--no. She turns and walks down the opposite hallway.

KENT
It's been so busy. We've got new management.
(pause)
Do I look significantly older to you? Am I losing hair?

FRANK
No more than usual.

KENT
I need a vacation, Frank.

Chuck Fisher walks up. He hands a Perrier to Kent.

CHUCK
This is for your lady.
(to Frank)
Are you the messenger?

FRANK
No.

KENT
Remember Frank, Chuck?

CHUCK
Frank! Sorry. Didn't recognize you, buddy. How you doing? Let's talk later.

ANGLE ON THE RESTROOM DOOR which opens again. Patty Delaney exits. She wears a new hairstyle, fashionable dress, a slight amount of make-up. She walks toward Kent. Frank watches with slow-moving dread. He turns to Kent, who doesn't have to nod yes.

Patty joins them with studied cool. She gives Kent a kiss, takes the Perrier and grabs his arm. She notices Frank.

PATTY
Oh my God. It's...

FRANK
...not the messenger.

Briefly shocked, she gathers herself. We watch as the wall goes up.

FRANK
Well. Uh. Well. You know. Congratulations. This is really going to happen?

A brief moment of eye contact, as Patty nods.

KENT
Where are you staying?

Someone takes Kent aside for a moment. There is embarrassed silence, as if Patty and Frank are strangers.

POV PATTY on Frank.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
He thinks I sold out.

POV FRANK on Patty.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
She completely sold-out.

POV PATTY on Frank.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
How dare you just show-up and convict me on appearances. I waited a year for you.

POV FRANK on Patty.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I can't believe the choices people make.

PATTY
Have you tasted the hors d'oeuvres.

FRANK
No. No, I haven't.

PATTY
Well they're not good.

FRANK
You look beautiful. Are you happy?

She nods.

FRANK
I can tell. Yeah.

INT. FLYER'S - DAY

The office is expanded. Two more printers operate in the back room. Two new employees work around them. Patty pours coffee for Claire, who is on the phone.

CLAIRE
We'll see you later. Okay.
(hangs up)
So you don't feel anything?

PATTY
No.

CLAIRE
Nothing at all?

Patty shakes her head.

PATTY
Absolutely not. I feel so good about it.

CLAIRE
Want him there? At the wedding?

PATTY
Who cares?

CLAIRE
How does he make you feel, really?

PATTY
Old. I was so young to fall for him. I didn't even know him. Don't you feel old sometimes?

Claire briefly checks herself in the mirror.

CLAIRE
Old? Never say that. Never. We are part of the Baby Boom Generation, the greatest consumer group in the history of the world! However old you are, that will always be the age to be! You will always be young, and you may...just possibly, with medical breakthroughs...live forever. Don't you feel better now?

VIDEO TAPE - BLACK

We hear Frank Walker's voice.

FRANK'S NARRATION
Who is Kent Byers?

JOEY'S NARRATION
What is the secret of his incredible success, power and charisma?

FADE UP on the video-tape image of Frank and Joey sitting outside on lawn chairs, back-to-back. There is a mock 60 Minutes feeling to the whole production.

FRANK
On the eve of Kent's momentous act of Bachelor Defiance, we dug out our old UW equipment for this amazing documentary. Gentlemen and gentlemen...This is Kent.

HOMEMADE TITLE: THIS IS KENT - THE SINGLE YEARS

JOEY
We begin our story with Kent's two brothers, Rick and Stu.. Here, they discuss the early years of bachelor Kent Byers.

Wobbly camerawork shows Kent's brothers, Rick (30) and Stu (25), sitting on the family couch. Like Kent, Rick and Stu both speak with a thin-lipped lack of emotion.

RICK
He's always had the cleanliness thing.

STU
He lost his virginity in this room. Right here on this couch.

RICK
He took about eight showers afterward.

Stu points to the corner, and the camera zooms in for a close shot.

SHOT OF FRANK

speaking as a witness.

FRANK
Most people know Kent as an entrepreneur, a successful Accounts Manager. But I remember a brief moment when Kent didn't want to be a businessman. He wanted to be a rock drummer...

HOME MOVIES OF KENT

at 14, bashing away at a set of drums, playing along with Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir".

FRANK'S NARRATION
There was only one thing holding him back. He couldn't keep time.

We watch him flail. He's bad.

SHOT OF JOEY appearing as a witness.

JOEY'S NARRATION
Inventive. That's the word they use when they talk about Kent Byers. At age 15, he won a state-wide prize for Most Inventive Junior when he devised a fascimile corporation based on his own product...

PHOTO OF KENT. He stands by a large contraption blowing steam. A Championship Blue Ribbon is tied on the steam-stack.

JOEY'S NARRATION
A steam-run cheese mill.

SHOT OF DOROTHY. A friendly Executive Assistant.

DOROTHY
He was always striving for success, and cleanliness. I was his first executive assistant. He told me "don't ever leave me alone". He never knew I had a crush on him.

SHOT OF JANET. A young executive.

JANET
He was busy with all the big clients. He never asked me out. I sent him every signal in the book.

SHOT OF THE POPE with a dubbed-voice

POPE
Often, I have admired the organizational skills of Kent Byers.

SHOT OF CINDY. About Kent's age, with a little girl on her lap. A smile plays about her lips.

CINDY
I was Kent Byers' first girlfriend. He hates to be alone. I left him alone once for two hours.

OFF-SCREEN INTERVIEWER (JOEY)
What happened?

CINDY
He flipped out. Called everyone he knew.

SHOT OF JOEY

JOEY
We asked the average man on the street what the biggest rumor about Kent Byers was?

SHOT OF MAN ON THE STREET # 1

MAN # 1
Kent Byers. Who's that?

QUICK SHOT OF JENNIFER

JOEY'S NARRATION
This girl will not appear in this video.

SHOT OF SANDY. Another Executive Assistant.

SANDY
I always used to break my keyboard, so that Kent would come and fix it.

SHOT OF FRANK

FRANK
Exciting, raucous, fun-loving, and a lover of modern hygiene...Kent Byers does it all. But how did he meet Patty?

SHOT OF CLAIRE

CLAIRE
Patty was going out with his roommate. No...it wasn't Joey. What was his name--I forget his name. The other one. The one who's not Kent.

She laughs as we CUT TO

INT. LIVING ROOM/THE HOUSE - SEMI-DARK - NIGHT

The video is the main event of the bachelor party. Frank and Joey watch Kent for a reaction to the video. Kent sits in the main chair, studying the television. He has no reaction, except to drain a beer without taking his eyes off the screen. Everyone around him laughs hysterically. Kent opens another beer as we CUT BACK to the...

VIDEO MONITOR

Joey and Frank sit on lawn chairs. Joey holds a cordless phone.

FRANK
We could not close This is Kent without a somber note.

JOEY
On the phone with me now is the secretary of Paulina, Sports Illustrated covergirl and Kent's media fantasy, who graced our hallway for so many years. Ma'am, is Paulina aware of the wedding of Kent Byers?

SECRETARY'S VOICE
She is not.

JOEY
Does Paulina have any comment?

SECRETARY'S VOICE
She does not.

JOEY
Thank you.

He hangs up.

FRANK
There you have it. Bitterness. Resentment. Pain.

SHOT OF PATTY smiling, pointing into the camera.

PATTY
Stay out of trouble tonight, Kent. I love you.

A makeshift THE END title.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The lights come up in the Dorito bag-and-beer strewn living room of The House. The ten fellow bachelors are whooping it up around Kent, who still sits dumbfounded.

KENT
I'm blown away.

The guys continue whooping. Kent pops open another beer, drains it.

BACHELOR # 1
You've gotta love it.

KENT
(laughing)
Guys--don't leave me alone!

He meets glances with Frank, who slips into the kitchen.

BACHELOR # 2
Let's watch it again!

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A kitchen wall-radio is tuned to easy-listening rock. It softly plays Dan Hill's "Sometimes When We Touch". We hear the sound of the video beginning again in the next room. Frank is rummaging through the refrigerator, as the door opens. It's Kent.

KENT
(extra tight-lipped)
Thanks for doing that.

FRANK
(knowing he hated it)
I'm glad you liked it. I wasn't sure what kind of reaction you'd have.

KENT
Really funny, huh?

FRANK
I thought it was.

KENT
How would you like for me to put your life up there. Mr. Can't Finish Anything.

FRANK
You...

KENT
How about when I drove you to the hospital, how about when you call me when your car breaks down...why wasn't that in your piece-of-shit video?

Frank stands up, as Kent shoves him across the kitchen.

FRANK
Hey--

KENT
You have a problem with me. You're jealous of me.

FRANK
Give me one break.

KENT
And you still love Patty.

FRANK
I hate your fuckin' bow-tie. I hate the way you act. You're not you anymore.

KENT
Come on. Let's go.

FRANK
You come on.

Kent swings at him, and Frank explodes, pinning him up against the refrigerator, knocking magnets to the floor. Kent trips Frank backward onto the floor. They struggle for a moment, trying to get a hold on the other. We CUT briefly to:

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

As sound of the fight continues, Patty cuts the phallic-shaped cake at her bachelorette party. The others in the restaurant notice and applaud. Patty's smile looks forced.

INT. KITCHEN

As they drunkenly fight, sprawling and spilling around the kitchen, they quickly lose energy and seriousness and end up in a heap on the kitchen floor.

The door opens, Joey wobbles in.

JOEY
Seeing you guys friends again, man, it does my heart good.

He slides down between them, puts an arm around each of them.

INT. CAR - STREETS - LATER EVENING

Frank and Joey drive Kent home. Kent is even more drunk.

KENT
Hot hot hot hot. Those girls in the video said I was hot hot hot hot.

FRANK
(wearily)
Yes, they did.

KENT
I never knew I never knew I never knew...

JOEY
He's sobering up. He's only repeating things three times instead of four.

KENT
...I never knew.

FRANK
So much for that theory.

They pull up to Kent's house. The lights go on inside.

KENT
Why can't you have a box...that you wear...that tells you...if people fugging...if people fugging... like you?

FRANK
I don't know, Kent. But you're home now. Come on. Let's put you in bed.

Patty appears on the doorstep, and walks out in a terry-cloth robe.

KENT
Million dollar idea million dollar idea mill...

JOEY/FRANK
Let's go, Kent. Let's take your million dollar idea and go to bed.

Patty opens the door to the car.

JOEY
He had a great time.

PATTY
Thanks you guys.

FRANK
How was your bachelorette party?

PATTY
Very boring.

They share a smile, their first real communication in awhile.

KENT
These are my BUDS FOR LIFE!

Frank shares a smile with Patty, and they both help Kent inside.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION AREA - DAYS LATER

Frank stands at the desk.

RECEPTIONIST
Welcome to the Delaney-Byers wedding. Name?

FRANK
Frank Walker.

RECEPTIONIST
You are a Gold Star guest. Here's your laminated pass, your events pass, and your Velcro attachment pen-set. The ceremony is at sunrise tomorrow. The cocktail say-hello is right down the hall.

INT. COCKTAIL RECEPTION - EARLY EVENING

Kent greets parents and relatives, gives a weary look to Patty, who is doing the same thing nearby. She returns his weary look.

Frank and Joey hold beers, watch from the corner. They're wearing their laminated passes, standing under a huge blow-up photo of Patty.

JOEY
You talk to Susan Stack?

FRANK
Where?

JOEY
Over there.

Through the crowd, we see a smart-looking corporate girl with a Dorothy Hammill haircut.

FRANK
Susan Stack. God, I haven't seen her since Grad Night when we were... yeah. I haven't seen her since Grad Night.

JOEY
She's married to Ricky Lotar now. There he is.

Ricky joins Susan. He looks like Pat Robertson.

FRANK
That's Ricky Lotar. The last time I saw him he'd taken mushrooms and was hanging nude from the Beta House, playing the Butthole Surfers, and spitting nickles.

They take in the panorama of young adults, already set in their ways.

JOEY
(pensive)
People, man. One day they're spitting nickles. The next day--Ward Cleaver.

Frank looks at Joey. He sees the relevance in Joey's statement.

FRANK
People change, Jo Jo.

JOEY
I'm working on a theory. Everybody became the person they made fun of in high school.

FRANK
Except us. We hope.

JOEY
(thoughtful)
I'll whiz to that, bro.

FRANK
I'll go with you.

JOEY
I think just the fact that we're having this conversation, means we're okay.

They move through the crowd. Joey gets lost in the swarm. Frank sees Patty up ahead, seizes the opportunity.

FRANK
Hi.

PATTY
Hi.

FRANK
I had a speech prepared. Do you want the whole thing, or just the jist...

Patty looks around, hyper-aware of all the guests.

PATTY
Split the difference.

FRANK
I'm very happy for you and I hope you know I'll always have a crush on you but I'll never do anything out of the bounds of friendship and congratulations.

PATTY
Awww. That's a neat thing to say.

She sees someone, starts to turn.

FRANK
Because I just can't <u>laugh</u> with anyone, the way...

She grabs his arm.

PATTY
I've got to go.

And she's gone, waving to another guest. Frank leans against a pillar, deflated.

FRANK
"Neat thing to say".

ANGLE ON PATTY as she moves through the crowd, avoiding eye contact, waving to a guest near the back door. As she nears the back door, we see that the guest does not exist. She ducks out of the room.

INT. CORNER

She ducks around the corner and spends a quiet moment, trying not to cry.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
Why isn't this logical? No matter what I do, those...old feelings come tapping at the window and slipping through the cracks...

As we DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE MOON

EXT. GOLF SHACK - LATE NIGHT

Patty sits waiting behind the pool cabana. She's part nervous energy, part resolve. Kent arrives.

KENT
You believe this moonlight?

PATTY
I know.

Kent gives her a kiss.

KENT
It's exciting. We're breaking all the rules, getting together the night before.

PATTY
Kent. Hon. I need your backrub.

KENT
Coming up.

She turns around. He rubs her back. The worry is on her face.

PATTY
Kent...

KENT
$20,000.

PATTY
What?

KENT
(soberly)
The cost of this wedding is $20,000. That's how much it would cost to not go through with this.

PATTY
Do you hate me?

KENT
No way. A little. I mean, I was the one who pressed for this so...you know.

He continues rubbing in the same place. Patty delicately moves his hand.

KENT
I'm scared scared scared. I want to go back to being 14, with a basketball and no responsibilities.

PATTY
(sighs)
This is the sound of my soul here.

KENT
And I never had a basketball. And I probably never was fourteen either. This is my biggest mid-life crisis yet.

PATTY
Mine too.

KENT
Big feelings...big things are welling up inside of me. No...I don't think we should get married.

PATTY
Neither do I.

KENT
Then it's off. I'm relieved.

PATTY
It's off. Me too.

FRANK
I think we should offer to split the expenses.

PATTY
Done.

KENT
Tell me Frank didn't bring this on.

PATTY
Frank didn't bring this on.

KENT
I'm just...so tense. I'm tense, tense, tense, tense, tense, tense...

PATTY
Here, let me get your back.

They switch places.

PATTY
You need a vacation.

KENT
I was counting on the honeymoon.

We see the corked-up panic on Kent's face, as she rubs.

PATTY
Then let's get married.

KENT
We can't get married just for the honeymoon.

PATTY
Why not? Neither of us have any kids.

KENT
We are kids.

PATTY
No kidding.

KENT
Maybe everyone goes through this.

PATTY
I don't think so.

KENT
Let's look up in the sky. If we see a shooting star, we'll get married.

PATTY
Okay. That's good. I like that.

They look up in the sky. We see the twinkling night-time sky. Many stars...

And then a SHOOTING STAR.

KENT
Did we see that?

PATTY
I don't know. Did we?

They look at each other, as we DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. WEDDING AREA - EARLY MORNING

In counterpoint to the sound of James Brown's "Try Me", we see the web of romantic intrigue that surrounds the sunrise wedding of Kent and Patty.

1) Mouths blowing steam away from the tops of styrofoam coffee cups.

2) Kent's family take their place in the aisles. The single members check out...

3) Patty's family taking the place in the aisles. The single members of her family return the looks.

4) Other friends and relatives take their places.

5) The hilltop is full as everyone turns to await the arrival of the couple.

6) People begin to check the sun, check their watches.

7) There is nervousness in the crowd, as no one appears.

8) Then, up the hill, walk Patty and Kent. They take their place at the hilltop altar.

9) Frank is alone, hands in pockets, tie askew, carnation in pocket, whimsical smile as we DISSOLVE TO...

INT. ROOM - DAYS LATER

Frank types on a miniature typewriter balanced on his lap. He's inspired. He bangs out the last page of his manuscript, pulls it out of the machine and triumphantly slams it down on a stack of sheets.

INT. NEW YORK PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank sits in the office of a New York publisher. He is youngish David Weber.

WEBER
It's provocative and timely, and I think there's a hell of a lot of promise there. I love it when the guy tries to be celibate.

FRANK
Thank you.

WEBER
But it's a downer.

FRANK
It has a slightly pessimistic viewpoint, yes.

WEBER
People want to feel good. "The Sexual Minefield" really isn't a "feel good" title. Is it?

FRANK
It fits the story.

WEBER
People want to be told "how to" today. They want a guide. They want to "know" how to...be, really.

Frank wonders where this is heading.

WEBER
We changed the title of your book, Frank. And I think you'll love what we did.

Frank feels the worst is on it's way, and it is. Weber flips over a mock cover of his book.

ANGLE ON THE COVER and it's a nerdy-looking character, his eyes bugged out. Shaped around his head are electric-looking letters that spell out the title:

DOIN' IT TODAY...
MEANS NOT DOIN' IT!
by Frank Walker

FRANK
I just...

WEBER
Do you love it?

FRANK
I hate it.

WEBER
We test-marketed the title. People love it.

FRANK
It's a joke. "Doin' It Today Means Not Doin' It"? You're making me a joke.

WEBER
Do you want the advance money, or not?

INT. MALL BOOKSTORE - DAY - MONTHS LATER

Frank stands in front of a B. Dalton book store, looking in the window.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
The next one. The next one will get published.

INT. MALL

Frank walks the mall.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I don't mind working at Dean Witter. The lunch breaks are a little longer than Merrill Lynch had...it's not a step down. Maybe that's something you face. You don't get everything you want, but you get things you didn't want that you come to appreciate. Or something like that.
(pause)
I guess Kent's doing what he wants.

Frank turns into a Sunset House-type gadget store.

INT. GADGET STORE

Frank joins a group of people clustered around a special marketing display. It's a metal stand, with a video monitor on top. We focus on the image on the video screen.

ANGLE ON THE SCREEN and we see Kent Byers at a desk. His hair is thinner, his clothes different.

KENT
Do you have the same problem I had? No Quality Person in your life. Sure, you meet people, but they're not your kind of people. As a recently divorced, independent man, I don't have the time to play the singles game. I'd been through some changes, and I wanted to make some changes. You know what turned it around? That little device right beneath this monitor.
(pause)
The Love Alarm.

Frank watches the monitor. Someone reaches past him, takes a Love Alarm from the display case.

KENT
Most studies show that there are only five personality types. Select your type, program your Love Alarm.
(he demonstrates)
And when your Type of person walks by--if they have a Love Alarm too--you both beep. It's the ultimate conversation piece and...

A couple demonstrates behind Kent. They both emit a low-toned beep.

KENT
It works.

Beneath the monitor, several more hands grab Love Alarms as we CUT TO

INT. MALL - LATER

Frank walks the mall.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I'll never understand the choices people make.
(pause)
Ever since the divorce, I hear from Kent only on major holidays. It's been six months.

INT. NEW FLYER'S OFFICE

Patty in her new, bigger office. She's full of energy, looks great, as we hear...

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Maybe I'm ready to call Patty. Maybe she's ready for me...maybe not. I'll bet she's looking great, though...

INT. MALL

Frank at a food stand.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I grew up in this mall. Lot of memories. Sure is different now.

He passes eight kids, all about 16, standing around listening to a beat box. Several on skateboards.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
You ask any three or four people what they really want to do with their life and the answers would be pretty scary.

KID # 1
Talk show host.

KID # 2
Investment counselor.

KID # 3
Media sensation.

KID # 4
Rich. Any field. Just rich.

Frank walks on.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Twenty-five. Boy did 26 seem ancient when I was 16. Ancient. I was sure that by 16, we'd all live in air-locks and have personal space ships and basically live forever. I was more idealistic then. But, you know, that was...

Frank passes a mall-size McDonald's, and the sign that reads: Billions and Billions served.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
...that was many billions ago.

He walks on.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I could have gone a few different ways.

ANGLE ON TWO JOCKS ON A BENCH. Their legs are spread, they hold onto their crotches as they check out girls. Thin gold chains around their necks.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I'm glad I didn't make the football team. I'd still be sitting on this bench, holding onto my crotch like it was going to fly away.

ANGLE ON A GUY IN A SUICIDAL TENDENCIES t-shirt. Translucent skin.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
This was always a possible mode for me.

ANGLE ON A HAIRDRESSER with a lion-like mane. He claps his hands in front and in back, smiling at all the girls.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Maybe I'm mutating into this.

SIX EXECUTIVE-TYPES WALKING IN A ROW

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Or this.

ANGLE ON A MUSCLE MAN. His arms are swinging at his sides, walking across Frank's path. He walks, and lets everybody else worry about avoiding him.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Perhaps this is the future me. No body fat. All muscle. Still haven't worked out the head problem. You could have the greatest muscle-set in the world. Your head will still look like a raisin.

The Muscle Man gives Frank a dirty look, as if he's read his mind.

ANGLE ON THE ORGAN MAN playing the Wurlitzer out in front of an empty music store.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Definitely. This is me at 50. Playing the Wurlitzer out front, running an artificial intelligence operation out of the back.

ANGLE ON A HAPPY COUPLE holding hands, enjoying each other's company.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
Guess I better get back to the office.

ANGLE ON A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN who checks Frank out, gives him a long come-hither look and then walks on with a flourish.

Frank speeds up, follows the girl. He passes in front of a mirror, checks himself out and moves on. She rounds a corner, Frank follows her, and sees her disappear into...

INT. WEBB'S JEWELRY STORE

Frank follows the woman inside. She walks straight to the back, where she joins a slick-looking Owner, 55. She slips an arm around his waist, and doesn't acknowledge Frank.

Frank laughs to himself, pretends to look at jewelry when he is intercepted by a hard-charging young Salesman ("Mark")

MARK
Welcome to Webb's!

FRANK
I was just looking.

MARK
Let me guess your name. Wes.

FRANK
No.

MARK
You look like a Wes.

FRANK
Frank. I'm a Frank.

MARK
You look like a Frank. You've got an honest face.

FRANK
I've heard that before. Thanks.

Frank gives him a look, and starts to exit.

MARK
Frank. You know about the Three C's, right?

FRANK
No, I don't.

MARK
Sit down. Hey wait, Frank. Talk to me for one minute.

FRANK
No, thanks.

MARK
(confidential)
Did you follow that girl in here?

Beat. He stops walking.

FRANK
Very very clever. But no.

MARK
Fine. Go. Goodbye. See you, guy.

Frank walks out the door. Mark exits a parallel side-door, in perfect step with Frank.

MARK
Are you familiar with Zircon, Frank? Wait. You're not a Zircon guy. You're not a Diamelle guy. You are a diamond guy, aren't you?

FRANK
Why are you doing this?

Mark stops. Frank stops.

MARK
(confidentially)
Are you gay?

FRANK
Aw, come on.

MARK
You have anybody in your love life?

FRANK
I've got a girl I've been going out with, sure.

MARK
I'll tell you what your problem is.

FRANK
What, did they give out a psychology degree with your jewelry license?

MARK
What do you think?

FRANK
I think you're just another person trying to make a buck off the pure state of romance between two people. You're part of the wall of bullshit that creates the problem.

MARK
Fear of intimacy.

FRANK
I'm not afraid to be intimate.

MARK
Fear of intimacy. The way things are. There's nobody out there. If you've got someone, you hang on. You work at it, every day. You make the magic. It doesn't appear.

Frank squints.

MARK
One day you're going to want to take the step, you'll have the ring, and you'll say to your girl, 'Do you know the Three C's?' and you'll sound like a genius because I taught you. I know people. They all come through my store.

Frank looks at him for a beat and we CUT TO

INT. STORE

The two men are huddled over a diamond under the glass case.

MARK
Nice cut, isn't it? That's the first C. Look deep. See that imperfection?

FRANK
Y...yes, I do.

MARK
There you go. I just saved you 500 bucks. That's clarity--the second C.

FRANK
Try me again.

Mark shows him another diamond.

FRANK
It's perfect. And the color...

MARK
What are you--trying to take my job? That's the third C--color.

FRANK
Mark. I have a problem buying a ring without a real girlfriend. Vicki isn't that kind of relationship for me. She's...

MARK
What? Tell me.

FRANK
You know--she's got two other guys who want her, but she wants me more. So I'm supposed to decide. Is that romance?

MARK
Yes. Buy the ring. Marry Vicki.

FRANK
You just want to sell me a ring.

MARK
Buy the ring. Get the girlfriend.

Frank leans closer.

FRANK
Get the girlfriend. Buy the ring.

MARK
I'll write it up.

Frank leans back in his chair. He laughs to himself as we CUT TO...

EXT. THE HOUSE DRIVEWAY - LATER

Joey shoots baskets with Frank.

JOEY
You have deep psychological problems. This is not like you.

FRANK
Who cares?
(shoots)
I have a nice job. I make nice money.
(shoots)
I go out with Vicki.
(shoots)
I have a nice car.
(shoots)
I have a ring.
(shoots)
My life is fucked, Joey. I'm not inspired.

Two young-looking freshman interrupt the game.

KID # 1
Is this house available for students?

JOEY
No, and tell your friends no.

KID # 2
Are you guys post-grad or what? 'Cause you look kind of old for the neighborhood...

Joey glares at them, and they move on.

JOEY
Frank, your friends depend on you to be optimistic.

FRANK
And what do I get out of that?

JOEY
Whoa. Seeing you like this is...

FRANK
What?

JOEY
It's like seeing Santa Claus on heroin.

FRANK
I'm lost, Joey. I feel lost.

JOEY
Kent went through this, and look what happened with him.

FRANK
Don't compare me with Kent.

Joey shakes his head.

INT. CAR - LATER

Joey cruises. He's on the car phone.

JOEY
Mikey. Will you keep an eye out for somebody?

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Patty sits at a table, looking beautiful and relaxed.

PATTY
David, you know what? I forgot to go to the bank today so...

Across from her sits David, her convenience relationship. He's about 28, with an intense stare.

DAVID
No problem. I'll cover it. You picked up last time.

TITLE: THE CONVENIENCE RELATIONSHIP

PATTY
Did I? No, I think you did.

DAVID
Next one's on you.

PATTY
Or I could put it on my card.

DAVID
Well, then I could pay you back half in cash and...

PATTY
Let's do that.

DAVID
That works out perfectly. Because I can put it on my expenses...

As David continues, we hear Patty's thoughts.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
David is such a nice guy.
(pause)
I slept with him that once. It was a religious experience for him. For me...hell.
(pause)
Why can't I be friends with the guys I sleep with, or sleep with the guys I'm friends with? It's not fair.

She sighs.

PATTY
Let me pay.

EXT. VALET PARKING - NIGHT

David and Patty stand together. He's looking at her, and she's avoiding his stare by rummaging through her purse.

DAVID
Patty...

PATTY
Do you have a couple singles for the parking attendant?

DAVID
Of course.
(as he digs)
Have you thought about us lately?

PATTY
Well, of course.

DAVID
I mean about us.

PATTY
Not that much about us, but...do we really want to change things? Really?

He nods vigorously.

DAVID
I can't wait to change things. I dream about changing things.

PATTY
We're friends, and...

DAVID
I have plenty of friends. I'm sick of friends.

A car pulls up. Frank gets out. He notices Patty. Patty is visibly rigid. Frank smiles, walks over. A false start hug.

FRANK
Hi.

PATTY
Hi.

They share a long minute.

FRANK
I'm here to meet a friend. I'd better...you really look great.

He turns and sees David.

FRANK
Hi.

DAVID
I'm David.

FRANK
Frank Walker.

They shake for the briefest of moments.

David's Saab pulls up. He's forced to get in his car, which leaves Patty and Frank together for a moment.

FRANK
Strange running into you.

PATTY
Give me a call.

They nod perfunctorily, and exit in different directions. Mikey joins Frank. He's now a class-A maitre'd.

FRANK
Thanks for the call, Mikey.

Mikey nods, as we CUT TO

EXT. READI-TELLER LINE - NIGHT

There is an almost party atmosphere around the instant-cash line. A nearby car is playing the stereo loud, it's door flung open. Several men wait their turn in line. An attractive Woman stands at the end.

Joey enters the picture, looking casual, looking everywhere but at the Woman. He takes his place in line. He adjusts his clothes, clears his throat, leans closer to her and says:

JOEY
Be with me.

The woman turns, looks very annoyed.

WOMAN
"Be with me?" Did you say that?

Joey nods cooly.

WOMAN
What's wrong with you? You're socially irresponsible, you're in a time-warp, you're outdated and anachronistic. I don't need cash this bad!

She walks off in a huff. After she is out of earshot, Joey responds.

JOEY
"Anachronism!" Speak for yourself! I went to college, you know!

The other guys in line--two aspiring younger Romeos--try to console Joey.

ROMEO # 1
She had a bad vibe, bro.

ROMEO # 2
Nothing would have worked.

JOEY
Nothing ever works anymore. How about with you guys?

They shrug.

ROMEO # 1
Try "Hey, maybe I'm a total stranger, but I get the feeling we'd be really, really good together."

JOEY
I've tried that. Didn't work.

ROMEO # 2
How about "I'm DAZZLED!".

Joey waits for him to finish.

ROMEO # 2
That's it.

Joey is more troubled than ever.

INT. THE HOUSE/LIVING ROOM

Joey sits on the sofa, talking with Frank.

JOEY
What's "anachronism" mean?

FRANK
Out of date. Obsolete. Why?

Joey stubs out his cigarette.

JOEY
I'm going to lay low until the early 90's. I'll be 30. I'm stripping myself down to the raw Joey, the basic Joey. The 90's are going to be good for me. Guys like me will come back, big. Big in the 90's.

Frank sits down.

FRANK
I think it's time for us to get our own places. Shake up the program.

JOEY
You think?

Frank nods.

FRANK
I'm seeing Patty next Friday. I'm going to close this chapter once and for all.

Frank looks inspired. Joey shakes his head.

JOEY
I like things the way they are. My t.v. My sofa...

EXT. THE HOUSE - TWO DAYS LATER

Two Movers wheel out the time-honored refrigerator, past Joey and Frank who sit on the porch. Joey is wistful.

JOEY
My refrigerator. This was a mistake.

FRANK
It's the right thing, Joey. You'll still be the landlord, you'll have your own smaller place. I handled all the paperwork for you.

JOEY
I don't trust the new tenants. They laughed at my Nightranger albums...

FRANK
I talked to Patty. Claire says hello.

JOEY
She did?

Frank nods.

JOEY
I knew she'd come crawling back.

FRANK
Give her a call. She liked your Christmas card.
(pause)
Since when do you send Christmas cards?

JOEY
(defensive)
I send Christmas cards. What is there, a law against Christmas cards? Sheesh. I sent one to her.
(pause)
Ah, just forget it. We're too much alike. She knows all my moves.

The movers take away the stereo. Joey shakes his head. They are approached by new tenants Julie and Lynette, both 19 and very studious-looking.

JULIE
Mr. Novak, we'd like the rug cleaned.

JOEY
Why?

JULIE
It smells like beer.

LYNETTE
It <u>really</u> does.

JOEY
Yeah, okay.

JULIE
Thank you.

JOEY
But I don't want a bunch of <u>guys</u> hanging around here.

LYNETTE
Mr. Novak, we're pre-law and we're studying for our LSAT's and we don't have time for any of that.

They girls exchange a look, which Joey misses and Frank catches.

FRANK
Enjoy the place.

They exit, as Joey and Frank toast.

JOEY
Good luck.

FRANK
To you too.
(on the house)
To the end of an era.

They drink.

FRANK
Joey, you ever thought about popping the question to a girl?

JOEY
Sure. The right girl. Sure. When I'm 60, silver-haired...

FRANK
Where would you do it?

JOEY
(suspiciously)
Death Valley.

FRANK
Too low.

JOEY
Thrill Mountain. Right at the top, right before it plunges through the rapids.

Frank shakes his head, laughing.

JOEY
Don't even think about it, Frank. You don't even know what Patty's like these days.

INT. NEW FLYER'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

It's the new office, expansive. Four printers. Claire hustles between phones and clients.

CLAIRE
(on phone)
Yeah. Franchise offices. I know. I think we created a monster. No, just kidding. Okay.

She hangs up, sighs heavily and turns to see Joey.

Joey clears his throat softly. He is about to say something, but thinks twice. He shifts his weight, tries a different approach.

JOEY
Hi Claire.

CLAIRE
Hi.

INT. RAIN CITY GRILL/BAR AREA - LATER

Frank and Patty sit in silence for a long beat, beers in front of them.

FRANK
Well. This was long overdue.

PATTY
Yes it was.

Another beat of silence. The Rose Girl appears with a basket of Sweetheart Roses.

ROSE GIRL
Sweetheart Rose?

Frank looks to Patty.

PATTY
(firmly)
No thank you.

FRANK
(more firmly)
Thank you, no.

ROSE GIRL
Okay. Okay. I'm just doing my job.

She moves on.

FRANK
Well, I hope Kent's happy in the Peace Corps. That's a very...you know, bold move.

PATTY
Giving all his money away?

FRANK
Yeah. He never writes either.

PATTY
He can't write. He's helping to ecologically prepare the island of Ria Tiga, which is off the tip of South America...

EXT. RIA TIGA - DAY

We see Kent for a moment, muscular, tanned and clad only in khaki shorts. He completes digging a irrigation ditch, helping to make Ria Tiga habitable. He looks deeply satisfied.

FRANK'S VOICE
What's the population there?

PATTY'S VOICE
(laughing)
One.

Kent takes out a towelette, and wipes his hands.

EXT. FAIR/THRILL MOUNTAIN - LATER EVENING

A large sign proclaims this: The World Famous Thrill Mountain. Frank and Patty wait in line with many others.

PATTY
I've never been on Thrill Mountain.

FRANK
But it's world famous, Patty. You could find aborigines in the jungle, ask them about the best ride in the Western World and you know what they'll say?

PATTY
What?

FRANK
Nothing, because they don't know. They've lived in the jungle their whole life.

Patty laughs.

PATTY
You're one of my favorite people, Frank.

It's one of those comments that he finds unsettling. They take a few steps.

FRANK
Then what happened between us?

PATTY
We didn't end too great, did we?

FRANK
I didn't know what I was doing. I've really missed you.

PATTY
The whole Kent episode makes me not want to...get into anything. With anybody.

A few steps.

FRANK
I think of you a lot.

A wall seems to go up.

PATTY
You should get to know David. You'd like him.

FRANK
You haven't mentioned him in thirty minutes. I was starting to get my hopes up.

She gives him a look.

PATTY
It's nice on Christmas and holidays to have someone just to have dinner with, just to be with.

The line inches closer, Frank gauges the time left.

FRANK
I want to talk about...

TICKET TAKER
Okay, let's go ahead and squeeze two more in. Go on in. Two together.

FRANK
We can wait for the next one.

TICKET TAKER
What's your problem?

PATTY
We can talk later.

She grabs Frank's arm, and leads him to a seat at the back of a cart filled with crazed jocks.

An iron bar locks them into the seat. Frank speaks quickly, as the car lurches forward.

FRANK
So anyway. Being with you feels great and...after a lot of thinking...

PATTY
You don't know how long it's been since I went on a "date".

FRANK
Patty, you're luminous tonight, and...

Two jocks in front turn around, give Frank a gimme-a-break look.

PATTY
Let's just enjoy the ride.

The car travels upwards to the peak.

FRANK
Anyway, about the future.

PATTY
Don't be surprised if I scream.

FRANK
I know I haven't seen you in awhile, but...

The ride ascends to the top.

PATTY
Great. Spill your purse.

She reaches down to gather her goods as the cart arrives at the top.

FRANK
Will you...

And the cart is poised at the top of Thrill Mountain.

FRANK
This may come as a surprise, but...

She's still reaching for the spillage from her purse.

FRANK
I think we should...

And the car takes off downward, before he can get the question out.

POV FRANK as the cart plunges downward, through the rapids.

REVERSE ANGLE as we see a cart-full of screaming people heading downward toward the rapids. Frank is obviously in another world, pissed at himself for blowing the moment.

The cart comes to a halt.

PATTY
Whoa!

FRANK
I think we should go again.
I think it's worth it.

PATTY
Once was great. I'd never be
stupid enough to go again.

She bolts, laughing out of the cart.

EXT. U DISTRICT

They walk past Domino's pizza, past The Goldrush...through the sound of clubs, video and KCMU.

FRANK
I don't think we're sell-outs.

PATTY
I still want to paint.

FRANK
I still want to write. As soon as
I can afford to.

PATTY
I just figure that the business buys
me the opportunity to be more creative
later.
(stops herself)
Listen to us. Our whole lives are
so...

FRANK
...convenient.

PATTY
Right.

They're nearing Patty's place, passing a few houses lit by the blueish glow of television.

PATTY
It's safer that way.

FRANK
My last girlfriend was a convenience
relationship. We never really connected.
We never even broke up. One of us just...
forgot to return the other's phone call.
So how did you meet him? David.

PATTY
He leased us our new franchise office in the 801 Building.

FRANK
Hmmm.

They arrive at her doorstep.

PATTY
Well. Pals?

She offers him her hand, firmly. Platonicly. He looks at it, shakes it. She starts to turn.

FRANK
Can I come in and use your phone?

PATTY
Oh...my place is an absolute mess.

FRANK
Just for a minute?

INT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Patty and Frank walk down the hallway.

PATTY
Just a second. I've got to do the whirlwind clean-up.

FRANK
I'll wait.

She turns the key, goes inside. Frank leans against the wall. He immediately goes to the fire hatchet, which has a mirror behind it, and checks his hair.

The door opens, and she beckons him inside.

PATTY
Come on in.

INT. APARTMENT

He steps inside. It's spotless.

FRANK
You sure know how to throw a place into shape, fast.

PATTY
It feels so stuffy in here. Let me get a crosswind going. There's the phone.

FRANK
What?

PATTY
The phone.

FRANK
Right.

PATTY
I have to unstick the window in the bathroom, which has to stay locked because it's near the alley and...yeah. So I have to use a hammer. I'll be right back.

She goes into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Patty checks herself in the mirror, moves to the window. She takes a hammer and a piece of wood--which she keeps nearby--and wedges it into the corner. She raises the hammer.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I can't go backward.

She hits the wedge.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I can't go backward.

She hammers again, harder.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Frank picks up the phone, puts it down again. He doesn't even put it to his ear.

FRANK
Busy!

Frank looks around the living room. In the other room, Patty hammers again. He notices some clothes in her walk-in closet, which opens into the living room. He focuses on a striped dress.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I pulled her out of that dress once.
(pause)
I'm chasing her. She knows how I feel. She put up the invisible wall. Have some integrity and leave.

Patty bangs again. Frank picks up the phone, puts it down again.

FRANK
Need some help?

PATTY'S VOICE
I'm fine! I'll be right out.

Frank notices some pictures on the wall near the kitchen. Pictures of Claire, pictures of a few strange faces...and several empty spots among the grouping of photos.

Beneath the pictures is a cabinet, the top drawer slightly askew. He opens the drawer. He finds four framed photos, including the one of himself caught by surprise on the night of the Big Dinner. He stares at them for a moment, puts them back in a hurry.

Patty walks back into the living room, waving the hammer for emphasis.

PATTY
Ladies and gentlemen--a crosswind.

Frank meets her halfway, kisses her. It's quite a kiss.

ANGLE ON THE HAMMER and it hits the floor with a thud.

They continue kissing. We hear the neighbors pound three times on the wall. Patty pulls away.

PATTY
Wait. That's the signal for the neighbors to see if I'm alright.

Frank grabs her, kisses her again.

ANGLE ON HER FEET and she stomps three times, with less and less power.

EXT. STREETS - SAME TIME

Joey's driving, on his car phone.

JOEY
I don't want to come on too strong, but...I'm circling you, Claire. You can't stop me. I'm a successful landlord and I might try some acting soon. Family

tradition. Who knows, anything could happen. Please quit laughing, because I'm serious. Wait! I see you.

ANGLE ON THE HOUSE. A windowshade shuts.

JOEY
But wait. I see you in the kitchen.

The kitchen windowshade shuts. A raindrop plops on Joey's windshield.

JOEY
Don't leave me out here in the rain, Claire. Give me a chance. Let's start all over again. I'm worth it.

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN

As she collapses against the refrigerator, laughing with the telephone.

CLAIRE
Okay. Let's start all over.

EXT. BALCONY - SAME TIME

Frank and Patty undress each other, kissing. They begin to make love in the rain.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
I love you.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I can't say it.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
(setting himself free)
I love you!

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I won't say it this time.

Frank pulls away from Patty. He yells into rain.

FRANK
I LOVE YOU!

As we DISSOLVE TO

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Frank smooths his hair. Patty rushes about, picking up stray pieces of clothing.

PATTY
I'll think about this all day.

FRANK
I will too.

PATTY
I don't know how I'll ever go to work. I could call the boss and cancel everything, but I am the boss.

FRANK
I'd better get going.

But he walks over to her, and grabs her. They pull each other back onto the bed.

FRANK
You always were so beautiful in the morning.

He kisses her, as the phone rings. Patty waves it away, and the machine picks it up.

PATTY'S MACHINE VOICE
Here's the beep. (Beep)

INCOMING MESSAGE
Hello. It's David. You didn't call me last night. Where were you?

Patty turns to Frank, holds him. As she looks at him:

PATTY
I was in the arms of heaven.

ANGLE ON THE MACHINE

DAVID'S MESSAGE
You were with that asshole. So I'll just assume that what happened happened and let's not pretend it didn't. Don't lie to me...

PATTY
I never lied to you.

DAVID'S MESSAGE
I know you're there. Because you aren't at work. So I'll assume that you're listening. And I'll just say this. I'll see you sometime down the line.

PATTY
Or maybe not.

DAVID'S MESSAGE
Wait. I wasn't sure I would feel better, but I do.
(pause)
You're a super person, but we're not each other's type. We gave it a shot. We'll see each other and laugh about this. I'm glad we had this talk. (Click)

PATTY
We just broke up.

FRANK
At least you were honest with each other.

Patty pushes him playfully.

EXT. HALLWAY - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Patty and Frank stand by the elevator.

PATTY
Call me later.

FRANK
Of course.

PATTY
Good.

The elevator arrives, they get inside.

FRANK
Will you marry me?

She turns and looks at him for a long moment. Frank gets a little nervous.

FRANK
Because that may have sounded casual, but it wasn't casual. I have never even practiced saying those wimp words before. In fact, I would probably take them back...

PATTY
Don't you dare. I love that you asked me to marry you. I love you.
(pause)
I want to enjoy this for awhile.

Frank is very nervous.

FRANK
Just...yes or no, please.

PATTY
I've got all these habits that would drive you crazy. They drive me crazy. I like pillows a certain way, for example. I have big opinions about pillows. And toothpaste...

FRANK
Not a problem.

PATTY
And about breakfast. I don't eat it anymore. And sleeping alone.

FRANK
What about toothpaste?

PATTY
Non-flouride.

FRANK
How do you like pillows?

PATTY
Not too soft.

FRANK
Same as me. Go on.

PATTY
That's it.

FRANK
Let's give it a try.

PATTY
I'm not the way I was when you first met me.

FRANK
Neither am I.

PATTY
I don't know if I can be with somebody.

FRANK
Quit fighting it. The worst thing we've got going for us is that I might be working in the 801 Building too. We're both working in the same building. That could destroy us.

PATTY
The same building.

FRANK
They offered me a job back at Merrill Lynch. VP.

PATTY
Why didn't you tell me? What are you going to do?

FRANK
Fire Chuck.
(as she laughs)
I still don't have an answer, Patty. Yes or no.

PATTY
I learned to be alone, and I like it.

FRANK
Well, you can't just miss someone on Valentine's Day or Christmas or on a major holiday. I know you. You know me. And as far as what we learned, if it's so important, which I doubt, maybe it's time we unlearned it. Because I hate it. And it just gets in the way.
(pause)
I want you to be with me. Let's get married.

PATTY
I want to be with you, but I don't want to get married. Not yet.

She grabs him, and holds him. He knows she's right.

FRANK
It's a deal.

She's laughing and crying. She's a mixed-up, shook-up girl...and it's probably her happiest state.

PATTY
I'm so happy. I love that we said no to the whole ritual.

FRANK
We said no?

PATTY
We said no to that, and yes to everything else.

Long moment.

FRANK
I can live with that.

He holds her. He feels her start to say something.

FRANK
Let's not talk.

ANGLE ON PATTY and her eyes are closed.

PATTY'S THOUGHTS
I hope this survives. I'll put in the time. I'll know within a year, I'll know...I don't want to be in business my whole life...but I can't...I'll...

Her voice continues over:

ANGLE ON FRANK kissing her, his eyes closed.

FRANK'S THOUGHTS
How can you know? How can you know if anything lasts. If you could freeze a moment in time...this is what's important... everything good comes from something this pure...I'll be a writer someday...I need her ...she inspires me...the trick is to...

And for the first time, the two voices connect.

FRANK/PATTY'S THOUGHTS
...try not to think too much.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 801 BUILDING/EIGHTH FLOOR ELEVATOR - END OF EVENING - MONTHS LATER

The elevator area is crowded with executives leaving for the day. The elevator arrives with an electronic pulse.

Patty Delaney stands in business attire, surrounded by a group of youngish executives. Claire says goodbye, joins the first group to crowd into the elevator.

More executives flow into the area. We move through the human traffic, until we get to...

Frank Walker, who stands with his own group. He's animated, as he deals with them.

Two more elevators arrive, and carries off a large group of the eighth floor congestion.

Then another elevator arrives and everyone crams into it except for Frank and Patty. They casually walk to each other, they have natural chemistry.

PATTY
How was your day?

FRANK
Same.

PATTY
You left the coffee on this morning.

FRANK
I left it on for you.

PATTY
I'll choose to believe that.

FRANK
You've got a strange look on your...

PATTY
Just listen.

FRANK
...your face.

PATTY
Just listen. About my birthday tomorrow. I decided not to celebrate 27. I don't want anything done...I know it's presumptuous, but I wouldn't want any surprise party or

anything. It's a big birthday and all I'd really like is...to get married. To you.

FRANK
You're unbelievable.

PATTY
I said it.

Frank leans against the wall.

FRANK
I'm just worried about one thing.

PATTY
Seriously? What.

FRANK
The pain of meeting someone new. The torture of wondering about your looks, the advice from friends, the Hades of waiting for someone to return your call, the agony of meeting the family, of going out...of buying food for one.
(pause)
I'm worried that if we get married, it will all change.

PATTY
What if we say it won't change. People do stay in love, you know, even after they get married.

Frank folds his arms.

FRANK
When I proposed to you, I didn't think you'd say yes...

PATTY
You didn't?

FRANK
I really didn't.

PATTY
Well I'm starting to get nervous now. I mean, I promise we won't start wearing His and Hers shirts...

FRANK
Let me give you your answer with a visual demonstration. These buttons are you and me...

ANGLE ON THE ELEVATOR BUTTON PANEL

FRANK
This is our future. Let's say up is yes, and down is the other choice.

His hand mock-wavers between up and down. And he chooses up. She hugs him.

PATTY
Does everyone in the world go through this?

FRANK
Just us, I think.

They kiss.

We linger on Frank and Patty. They've closed a chapter in their lives. We move slowly out the nearby window, as we hear...

FRANK
Did I ever tell you about the Three C's...

EXT. 801 BUILDING - DUSK

Ten yards away from the building, Frank and Patty are only shadows by the window. We hear a strange new voice.

GIRL'S VOICE # 1
I'm always the one that has to chase after them. I always call <u>them</u>...

Then another one, talking very fast.

MAN'S VOICE # 1
I'd like her better if she didn't have those cats. That's the problem. She <u>thinks</u> she's a cat...

Then another voice.

GIRL'S VOICE # 2
If love was logical, we'd be married. But it's not, so we go out da da da da. We sleep together and there's no pressure...

And other voices join in.

WOMAN'S VOICE # 3
I'm 35. I don't have a house. He's got money. Is it so wrong to be with him? It's not like I don't like him...

MAN'S VOICE # 3
There's no reason she shouldn't love me. I can teach her to love me...

GIRL'S VOICE # 4
I'm not a needy person. I usually don't need a man to be happy...

MAN'S VOICE # 4
It's scary. She finishes my sentences...

GIRL'S VOICE # 5
Who should call who? Because...

GUY'S VOICE # 5
I met somebody new today...

These voices continue with their stories, and they're joined by ten, then twenty, then forty others, until all we hear is a human hum, the din of a city full of voices obsessing over the singles experience, as we're high above Seattle.

CUT-TO-BLACK - CREDITS - MUSIC

We hear the music of Bobby Morse's soul classic "Searchin' For My Love", which is definitely the last word on the subject.

THE END